



Politeness  
and  
Politics  
in Cicero's Letters



JON HALL

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## Abbreviations

- CIL*      *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Ed. Th. Mommsen et al.  
(Berlin 1863–2003)
- LSJ*      *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Ed. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, revised  
and augmented by H. S. Jones, with a revised supplement  
(Oxford 1996)
- OCD*      *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition revised. Ed. Simon  
Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford 2003)
- OLD*      *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford 1982)
- RE*      *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.  
Ed. A. von Pauly, G. Wissowa and W. Kroll (Stuttgart 1893–1980)
- TLL*      *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig 1900–)

All references to ancient texts are to works by Cicero unless stated otherwise. Abbreviations for ancient authors and their works follow the conventions used in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edition revised), except for Quintus Cicero *Commentariolum Petitionis*, for which the abbreviation Q. Cic. *Comm. Pet.* is used. References to Cicero's letters include the reference number assigned by D. R. Shackleton Bailey in his commentaries, texts, and translations, in the form (e.g.) SB 123. See the Bibliography for further details.

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## Note on Texts and Translations

Modern students of Cicero's letters are fortunate to have at their disposal the commentaries, Latin texts, and English translations of D. R. Shackleton Bailey. In this book, I follow the Latin text of his Loeb editions, as these are the most recent versions (see Shackleton Bailey 1999, 2001, and 2002 in the bibliography). Their occasional misprints have (I hope) all been corrected. The English translations are my own modified versions of those by Shackleton Bailey in the same volumes. My modifications aim in the first place to render each conventionalized Latin phrase in a uniform manner, so as to bring out more clearly their element of conventionalization. My second aim has been to update certain English idioms that are now showing their age. Finally, where Cicero uses especially long sentences of elaborate courtesy, I have tried to represent more closely the structure of the original Latin in order to convey their punctilious manner. It seemed redundant, however, and in some cases counterproductive, to try to produce new translations for sentences where Shackleton Bailey captures Cicero's sense with particular felicity and where concerns with politeness are not paramount.

For the texts of Cicero's *De Officiis*, *De Oratore*, and *De Amicitia*, I have used the editions of Winterbottom 1994, Kumaniecki 1995, and Powell 2006, respectively. For the texts of Plutarch, I have used the editions of Ziegler 1959, 1968, and 1973. Translations are my own.

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POLITENESS AND POLITICS  
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# Introduction

## *Cicero's Letters and Linguistic Politeness*

Cicero's correspondence places us at the very heart of political life in Late Republican Rome. Our extant collection includes letters written not just by the orator himself, but also by many of the other leading figures of the period, men such as Caesar and Pompey, Brutus and Cassius, Cato and Mark Antony. These exchanges provide perhaps our most direct insight into the often tense negotiations that shaped events during these turbulent and deadly years. But their importance rests not merely on these compelling details of political history. They are vital social documents, too. These letters show us at first hand how personal relationships were regularly conducted among the Roman elite. They reveal the ways in which these men of phenomenal power, wealth, and ambition tried to negotiate conflict, cultivate alliances, and broker uneasy compromises. In short, they provide a fascinating map of Roman aristocratic manners.

I suggest in this book that these aspects of the correspondence can be profitably analyzed from the perspective of linguistic politeness. The polite phrases and courteous remarks incorporated into these epistolary encounters can tell us a good deal about the values and concerns that underpinned aristocratic interaction. This is scarcely a new observation. Over four decades ago, Peter Brunt at the conclusion of his renowned analysis of Roman *amicitia* suggested that the "polite civilities" exchanged between such men "merit attention for their own sake."<sup>1</sup> Yet only modest advances have been made in this direction. Modern scholars have certainly appreciated some of the socio-linguistic implications of the letters (that is, the way in which their language



can reveal significant features of Roman social behavior).<sup>2</sup> But the topic of polite discourse remains largely untouched.<sup>3</sup>

Latin, in fact, has no simple equivalent of our word "politeness."<sup>4</sup> This deficiency is not especially surprising or significant. Our own modern definitions of politeness are often vague and imprecise, and some scholars take the step of dividing the phenomenon into several different components (see later in this Introduction). We should not be too bemused then if the Romans were able to get by without a single overarching term like our own. As we shall see, several different Latin words, including *verecundia*, *humanitas* and *urbanitas*, help to cover the semantic range of the English term.<sup>5</sup> More significant is the fact that a concern with linguistic courtesy is palpable throughout Cicero's correspondence. A particularly striking example appears in a letter to Atticus from 50 B.C., in which he complains about the irritating tone adopted by M. Brutus in their recent epistolary exchanges (*Att.* 6.3.7; SB 117):

*omnino (soli enim sumus) nullas umquam ad me litteras misit Brutus, ne proxime quidem de Appio, in quibus non inesset adrogans et ἀκοι-  
νονόητον aliquid. . . in quo tamen ille mihi risum magis quam stoma-  
chum movere solet; sed plane parum cogitat quid scribat aut ad quem.*

To be sure (I write in confidence) Brutus has never sent me a letter, not even most recently about Appius, that did not contain something arrogant and uncivil. . . Still, in this respect he usually makes me smile rather than snarl. All the same, he really gives too little thought to what he writes and to whom.

The closing phrase here (*ad quem*) is especially instructive. Brutus' epistolary style has evidently failed to strike the appropriate note of personal deference. Cicero feels he deserves more respect than he has been shown. Brutus is thus characterized as arrogant and rude (*adrogans et ἀκοινονόητον*).<sup>6</sup> Cicero may pretend to laugh the matter off (*risum magis quam stomachum*), but his sense of grievance is very real. This is in fact the second time that he has complained about the matter to Atticus.<sup>7</sup>

Such sensitivity to the nuances of epistolary manners appears throughout Cicero's letters. Sometimes, as here, it becomes apparent because others have breached the expected linguistic norms. Usually, however, Cicero demonstrates his concern with such propriety through his own careful deployment of appropriate language and conventionalized strategies of politeness. It is thus important for us to try to get to grips with these conventions if we want to appreciate the subtleties of Late Republican letter-writing. Only then can we properly appreciate when they are being violated, embellished or

manipulated for particular effect. But, before we do so, we need to consider in greater detail both the precise nature of politeness and the social context in which Cicero's correspondence was written.

## Sociolinguistic Theories of Politeness

Most socially competent individuals acquire from experience what we may call a practical sense of politeness. Over the years, we learn to judge whether someone is treating us politely or not. These judgments are usually culture-specific, as becomes all too obvious whenever we travel to other countries and have to confront sometimes quite subtle differences in social mores. It is not always easy, however, to identify precisely the essence of the politeness with which we are familiar. What exactly makes one remark more polite than another?

This question has attracted a good deal of attention from sociolinguists in recent decades, and not surprisingly various answers have been proposed.<sup>8</sup> A useful starting point is provided by Janet Holmes: "Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship to you."<sup>9</sup> This definition, however, gets us only so far. What we would like to know is how exactly individuals form this sense of what is "appropriate." Similarly, there is much to agree with in Robin Lakoff's assertion that polite language aims to "reduce friction in personal interaction."<sup>10</sup> Yet this formulation does not help to identify why such friction arises in the first place, and how specific types of remark serve to ease it. The same goes for the long-standing folk notion that politeness essentially consists of "showing consideration for others."<sup>11</sup> Consideration in what respects? And how does this aim manifest itself linguistically?

The most influential answer to these questions was formulated by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in their groundbreaking study of politeness first published in 1978.<sup>12</sup> Linguistic politeness (they claim) is generated primarily by the individual's concern with "face." Their emphasis on face derives largely from the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, who in his analysis of the processes of social interaction defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [*sic*]." It is "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes."<sup>13</sup> Thus, in the course of our dealings with others, we expect this face to be acknowledged and respected. If it is not, we are said to "lose face," something that often provokes in us feelings of anger and embarrassment. We also speak of "saving" face—that is, trying to maintain our desired image of poise and competence whenever social encounters expose it to some threat.<sup>14</sup> Goffman further stresses the

mutually supportive nature of much social interaction. Although we naturally have a strong interest in saving our own face, we often take considerable pains to save the face of those with whom we come into contact. Personal encounters usually run more smoothly if we do so. Since it is generally not in our interest to go around embarrassing or insulting other people, most social encounters to some degree involve mutual efforts to protect each other's face.<sup>15</sup>

The simple yet crucial contribution of Brown and Levinson was to emphasize the link between these concerns and linguistic politeness. They perceived that politeness derives fundamentally from the "face-needs" of those involved in a social encounter. It is this basic feature of personal interaction that generates polite language. Brown and Levinson then go on to develop Goffman's model by suggesting that face comprises in fact two contrasting aspects: "positive face," which constitutes the individual's natural and constant desire that his or her projected self image be approved of and supported; and "negative face," which comprises the individual's desire that his or her rights not be impeded by others. Some strategies of linguistic politeness (they claim) satisfy our concerns with the former, others, our concerns with the latter.<sup>16</sup>

This model of politeness has much to recommend it. First, it goes a long way toward answering some of the questions not addressed by other definitions. It identifies, for example, the source of social tension in encounters: our concern with face. And it explains how specific strategies ease this tension: they satisfy our different types of face-need. Polite remarks are "appropriate" according to the degree to which they achieve this end. Second, their study furnishes us with some useful concepts and terminology. The notion of "face-threatening acts," for example, provides a convenient way of referring to social tasks that tend to generate linguistic politeness. Making requests and declining invitations are inherently awkward social maneuvers precisely because of the face-threat (to both speaker and addressee) that they involve.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Brown and Levinson's representation of politeness as "facework"—a neologism probably unfamiliar to most Classicists, but an established term in sociolinguistics—usefully emphasizes the *function* of polite language in social interaction. It reminds us that courtesy is not just a matter of superfluous ritual; it has a vital job to play in facilitating social encounters.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, their interpretation of politeness arguably rings true to our own experiences. It often makes coherent sense, for example, of English idioms that we use everyday quite competently, but whose precise function we scarcely appreciate on a conscious level. Likewise, the awkwardness of certain social situations becomes readily comprehensible when cast in terms of face-threat. The vulnerability of our face in such contexts is (unfortunately)

all too familiar. As Goffman stresses, a person's face is not a constant, fixed entity; it is in need of frequent reaffirmation from those around us. Polite remarks and other tokens of respect play an important role in this process.<sup>19</sup>

Brown and Levinson's model, then, contributes much to our understanding of linguistic politeness, and several of their concepts will be utilized in the present study.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, various scholars have applied these concepts to aspects of the Greek and Roman world with considerable success.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, there are certain problems in their model that make its extensive application to Cicero's letters problematic. First, the study draws its data largely from conversational situations; it has little interest in strategies of politeness used in more formal or written contexts.<sup>22</sup> This fact renders its conceptual model rather limited in application, despite the authors' claims to universality.<sup>23</sup> In particular, it leads to a general neglect of the "ceremonial" politeness regularly used in more formal social contexts, contexts that (as we shall see) regularly occur in Cicero's letters.<sup>24</sup>

Second, their approach to politeness phenomena arguably shows a cultural bias toward the use of negative politeness. At the simplest level, this bias is reflected in the length of their respective treatments: negative politeness is allotted around a hundred pages, whereas positive politeness is discussed in just twenty-seven.<sup>25</sup> More tellingly, critics have discerned in their general perspective an "overly pessimistic, rather paranoid view of human social interaction," in which the main priority is to avoid giving offense.<sup>26</sup> This tendency is evident, for example, in their approach to honorific language. Honorifics (they claim) convey a deference that "serves to defuse potential face-threatening acts by indicating that the addressee's rights to relative immunity from imposition are recognized."<sup>27</sup> Such strategies are thus classified as a form of negative politeness. Yet honorific language is not always used to compensate for an upcoming imposition. In sharply hierarchical societies, displays of respect are often valued for their own sake and regarded as a prerequisite for basic interaction.<sup>28</sup> From this perspective, they may be more properly viewed as a form of positive politeness: their aim is to acknowledge and celebrate quite explicitly the addressee's social status. Brown and Levinson, however, seem little inclined to integrate this aspect of polite language into their conceptual model.<sup>29</sup> As we shall see, in ancient Rome, where vast inequalities of wealth and power prevailed, and where hierarchy rather than egalitarianism was deeply engrained, ceremonial politeness played a prominent role.

We may also have reservations about Brown and Levinson's use of the terms "positive" and "negative" as labels for their categories of politeness. In the first place, they tend to encourage a decisively binary view of politeness phenomena. They imply that any given strategy aims at either one or the other of two mutually exclusive goals. To be fair, the authors themselves

stress that linguistic encounters involve a rather more complex matrix of competing face-needs;<sup>30</sup> but these subtleties tend to be elided both in their own analysis and in the works of later scholars.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the terms have their own peculiar heritage. They derive ultimately from Durkheim, whose division of religious ritual into two types (positive and negative) is invoked by Goffman in his discussion of “supportive” and “remedial” linguistic interchanges.<sup>32</sup> The terminology has thus traveled a long way, both temporally and conceptually. We should not be surprised if its fit with the politeness phenomena deployed in Cicero's letters is not especially close.

For these reasons, I use in this study rather different labels for the most prominent types of politeness in Cicero's letters. This categorization reflects more meaningfully, I hope, the Roman aristocratic concerns that generate these linguistic phenomena. These labels may also be rather more transparent in meaning to the student of Classics who has no close familiarity with sociolinguistic theory. In the following chapters, then, I shall refer to three basic forms of politeness.

### The Politeness of Respect (or *verecundia*)

One type of politeness that plays a significant role in Cicero's letters is what I term the “politeness of respect.” The Roman impulse toward this form of linguistic behavior derives in large part from the sense of *verecundia* instilled in individuals during the process of socialization. As Rober Kaster has elegantly explained, “*verecundia* animates the art of knowing your proper place in every social transaction and basing your behavior on that knowledge.”<sup>33</sup> Individuals can demonstrate their *verecundia* in various ways;<sup>34</sup> but in the context of speech and writing, *verecundia* manifests itself most often through the use of “appropriate” language. The accomplished Roman soon learned how to convey the expected degree of linguistic respect to those above (and below) in the social hierarchy.<sup>35</sup> As we have seen, it is precisely this discernment that Cicero misses in the letters of Marcus Brutus in 50 B.C.

Little Roman theorizing on this facet of linguistic decorum survives. Nevertheless a couple of brief remarks in Cicero's philosophical treatises confirm the links between language and *verecundia*. At *De Officiis* 1.136, Cicero declares: *maximeque curandum est ut eos quibuscum sermonem conferemus et vereri et diligere videamur*. (“And we must take the greatest care to appear both to respect those with whom we converse and to value them.”) Similarly at *De Amicitia* 82 he claims: *neque solum colent inter se et diligunt, sed etiam verebuntur*. (“[Friends] will not only cherish and value, but also respect each other.”) As Lossman notes, in this latter example the verb *vereri* refers to a

feeling of respect (*Achtung*) between the individuals concerned, respect that is characterized by a sense of space and distance (*Abstand und Distanz*) in their relationship.<sup>36</sup> Even in the relatively relaxed face-to-face encounters imagined in these two passages, the Roman aristocrat was to observe a measure of restraint in his language.<sup>37</sup> The politeness of respect was one means of expressing this sense of *verecundia*.

One manifestation of this type of politeness can be seen in the care taken over forms of greeting and direct address in Roman correspondence.<sup>38</sup> The opening remarks from one of Cicero's letters to Tiro, his freedman and secretary, illustrate the phenomenon well (*Fam.* 16.18.1; SB 219):

TULLIUS TIRONI S.

*quid igitur? non sic oportet? equidem censeo sic, addendum etiam "suo."  
sed, si placet, invidia vitetur; quam quidem ego semper contempsi.*

#### GREETINGS FROM TULLIUS TO TIRO

Well then! Isn't this form of greeting appropriate? I certainly think so, and "to his own Tiro" ought to be added as well. But, if you prefer, let's avoid other people's jealousy. Personally I've always regarded it with disdain.

Cicero here attempts to reassure Tiro that the use between them of a familiar form of address is entirely appropriate. In the initial greeting, he employs his own *nomen* ("Tullius") by itself, instead of the more formal combination with "Marcus" (his *praenomen*);<sup>39</sup> and Tiro himself is referred to by his *cognomen* alone.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, Tiro's anxiety regarding this familiarity is revealing. Evidently, he is worried that some third party may make (or has already made) disapproving remarks about Cicero's intimacy with him.<sup>41</sup> Such intimacy was no doubt viewed in some quarters as an unsettling breach of the social gulf traditionally supposed to prevail between master and ex-slave.<sup>42</sup> Cicero to his credit derides the spiteful petty-mindedness of such critics and suggests that in fact an even more familiar form of greeting—one using the personal possessive adjective *suo*—would be appropriate between them. The suggestion is a warm compliment to Tiro and demonstrates Cicero's real affection for him. Nevertheless, the incident alerts us to the close relationship that prevailed between linguistic usage and social status—and the Roman sensitivity to it.<sup>43</sup>

Forms of address, however, were only one way of demonstrating respect. In Cicero's letters, the acknowledgment of a person's importance is more

commonly conveyed through the use of an appropriately formal linguistic register. By deploying a diction and vocabulary distinct from that used in casual or intimate settings, the writer is able to convey a special respect for the addressee. The exchange at hand becomes marked by a degree of restraint and regulation that establishes a clear sense of social distance between the two parties.<sup>44</sup> As modern sociolinguists have noted, in situations of high formality, only a restricted set of actions and words tends to be considered appropriate for use; less formal settings, by contrast, normally permit a wider range of activities and modes of expression.<sup>45</sup> This concern with restraint often prevails when the preservation of social boundaries takes on particular importance. Formal language is thus usually expected in modern judicial settings, in which the position of those in authority needs to be duly acknowledged.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, more relaxed (or "close" relationships) are characterized by an indifference to concerns of status. In many aristocratic exchanges in ancient Rome, we can discern a high degree of restraint and regulation, expressed to a large extent through linguistic formality.

In Cicero's letters, as we shall see, a set of conventionalized strategies of politeness features prominently in this formal linguistic register. The repeated association of these strategies with situations of social restraint would have initially endowed them with this air of formality; and this in turn would have enabled them to establish such a tone whenever they were used. One of the aims of chapter 1 (and the associated appendix) is to examine these phrases in detail, so that we can appreciate with some precision the tenor that they bring to an epistolary exchange. Their full significance is easily missed, if we are not aware of their conventionalized status or the formal contexts in which they were regularly used.

This kind of analysis poses certain challenges, however. The first involves issues of description and calibration. As the sociolinguist John Wardhaugh observes, the organization of language into different stylistic registers is a common social phenomenon. Indeed, he asserts that native speakers of *all* languages control a range of stylistic varieties.<sup>47</sup> But this range usually extends beyond a simple binary division into the categories "formal" and "informal." It consists rather of a broad stylistic spectrum with numerous varying degrees of formality and informality. The problem is that English does not possess a finely graded array of adjectives that allows us to distinguish these differences with any subtlety. A framework such as "highly formal," "formal," "informal," and "intimate" provides a useful starting point;<sup>48</sup> but more precise calibration remains difficult.<sup>49</sup> In the following discussion, the phrase "more formal" is often used as a convenient way of referring to language that lies toward one end of this spectrum of linguistic registers; it should be understood, however, that the term inevitably involves some imprecision.

A second (related) problem resides in the complexity of linguistic usage. The register of an exchange depends not just on one or two phrases, but on the social and linguistic context as a whole.<sup>50</sup> As we shall see, an expression of thanks (for example) does not by itself make a letter especially formal or polite. But, when combined with certain other linguistic strategies, or when developed at considerable length, it can contribute significantly to the respectful nature of a written exchange. Thus, the various conventions identified in the following chapter should not be viewed as decisively "formal" in each and every case. Each example needs to be considered in its own context, and the particular social complexities carefully weighed. Nevertheless, our list of conventionalized strategies should provide a general framework that will assist in these assessments.

In fact, we shall see that this politeness of respect appears in quite a wide variety of contexts. As we might expect, it is found in letters traditionally categorized by scholars as "official," such as public letters to the senate.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, clearly defined social transactions such as recommendations and requests for favors usually called for a similar measure of formality and restraint. But often this type of language appears in exchanges that do not fall neatly into the epistolary categories constructed by modern scholars.<sup>52</sup> In ancient Rome, decorum was evidently expected across a wide range of encounters that involved powerful aristocrats.

The element of respect and *verecundia* inherent in this more formal linguistic register becomes clearer when we contrast its use with the lively colloquial idiom found in many of Cicero's letters to Atticus and Marcus Caelius.<sup>53</sup> This elegant *sermo cotidianus* is of course an important and distinctive feature of the correspondence, one that is all the more valuable because we have little other material of this type from the Late Republic.<sup>54</sup> For the present study, however, its main significance lies in the point of comparison that it provides. Its freer use of language throws into sharp relief the restraint of the more formal letters. In this *sermo cotidianus* Cicero feels at liberty to coin new words, deploy colloquial expressions and utilize conversational sentence-structures. There is no concern that such license be interpreted as disrespectful; nor does Cicero try to constrain his language to conform to the judgmental scrutiny of others. The more formal letters, by contrast, demonstrate an inherent tendency toward standard, "proper" language. They are characterized precisely by the absence of these colloquial elements.

From the perspective of traditional linguistics, then, with its emphasis on morphology and syntax, this formal aristocratic idiom is not especially compelling (one reason perhaps why it has not generated much interest among Latin scholars). But, from a sociolinguistic point of view, this politeness of



respect is important and revealing. In particular, its extensive use can be linked to the deep-seated aristocratic concern with social status and hierarchy. This preoccupation with personal rank and *dignitas* has long been acknowledged as one of the defining features of the upper classes in Rome. It mattered intensely to the Roman grandee where he sat at the games, how many people came to visit him in the morning, what statues or inscriptions were awarded in his honor.<sup>55</sup> The powerful senator and patron was used to being treated with deference by his lesser friends and clients, on the one hand, and with great mutual respect by his peers, on the other. The French scholar Gaston Boissier has reconstructed the social dynamics of this aristocratic world perceptively:

When we think of those armies of slaves [that Roman aristocrats] gathered together in their houses and on their estates, of those freedmen who formed a sort of court around them, of that multitude of clients who encumbered the streets of Rome through which they passed, of those hosts they had throughout the world, of those cities and realms that implored their protection, we can better understand the authority of their speech, the haughtiness of their bearing, the breadth of their eloquence, the gravity of their deportment, the feeling of personal importance which they threw into all their actions and speeches.<sup>56</sup>

This sharply hierarchical context helps to explain why the politeness of respect played such an important role in Cicero's correspondence. An aristocrat's *dignitas* (like any individual's face) was not a stable, constant entity. It was always open to challenge and re-evaluation during the many (often public) encounters in which the aristocrat took part. Much time, energy, and expense were thus dedicated to proclaiming both his own achievements and those of his family. Political defeats were keenly felt, and clashes in the senate and law courts could lead to bitter feuds.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, the many references in contemporary literature to the prevalence of *invidia* (jealousy or resentment) in political life suggest an environment charged with rivalry, contention and suspicion.<sup>58</sup> One man's success potentially limited another's chances for advancement and could often highlight the failure of those around him to achieve a similar level of prestige. The sense of entitlement displayed by many from the most prominent families, and their corresponding resentment of aspiring newcomers, further contributed to the creation of a highly fraught and combustible political environment. It is against this cultural background that Cicero's correspondence and its exploitation of linguistic politeness needs to be read. In such a context polite manners provided a

crucial means through which potentially awkward relationships with ambitious, powerful acquaintances could be negotiated. The politeness of respect functioned as one element in the finely calibrated and ongoing calculus of social prestige.<sup>59</sup>

## Affiliative Politeness

A second prominent type of politeness in Cicero's letters is what I term "affiliative politeness." As we have seen, the prime aim of the politeness of respect is to acknowledge a decisive social distance between writer and addressee. Affiliative politeness, by contrast, aims to reduce this sense of distance. In some respects, this form of politeness corresponds to Brown and Levinson's "positive" politeness; but, as I hope to show, the unique social context in which Roman aristocrats conducted their political business generated a distinctive form of courtesy that goes beyond the strategies included within Brown and Levinson's category. In particular, Cicero's correspondence makes extensive use of explicit assertions of goodwill and friendship as aristocrats attempt to forge political alliances with each other. The label "affiliative politeness" may help to represent this function rather more clearly.

Strategies of affiliative politeness can take various forms. One example has recently been highlighted by J. N. Adams in his examination of bilingualism and "code-switching" in Cicero's letters. One reason that Cicero switches in his letters from Latin to Greek (although, as Adams stresses, by no means the only reason) is to try to convey the existence of a special bond between himself and his correspondent. By using Greek phrases Cicero draws attention to their shared cultural background and common interests. His aim is to engage with the addressee in an implicitly friendly way rather than insist on the differences between them.<sup>60</sup>

Most of the strategies we will be considering, however, take a rather more explicit approach and are shaped significantly by the peculiar political environment in which Cicero and his peers operated.<sup>61</sup> Political success in ancient Rome depended largely on personal initiative and force of character. Without the structure provided by an established political party system, aspiring politicians had to work hard to form alliances and ad hoc agreements with other powerful men.<sup>62</sup> Through such cooperation, they could hope to gather decisive support in the senate and popular elections, as well as more general financial and political clout. Productive working relationships were often characterized as "friendships" (*amicitiae*), despite their utilitarian element.<sup>63</sup> And although such associations might prove relatively stable, they were always subject to shifts and realignments according

to the exigencies of the moment. These alliances were thus in need of constant consolidation and re-negotiation. The shrewd politician had to be able to cultivate working relationships actively and energetically. This task often required him to try to reduce the perceived social distance between himself and his correspondent.

This aim, however, tended to run counter to the competitive pursuit of individual *dignitas* already discussed. Indeed, these political negotiations often involved men who had clashed in the past and who had good reason to dislike and mistrust each other. As we shall see, the resulting tension was resolved in part by the development of conventionalized expressions of regard and affection. These expressions provided a convenient and socially acceptable means of conveying affability toward acquaintances with whom one was not especially close. Their conventionalized form ensured that the degree of respect required by the context was not compromised, while their content signaled satisfactorily the writer's affiliative intent. This process of conventionalization and its implications will be examined in more detail in the following chapter. As we shall see, it is an important feature of Cicero's epistolary language, one that can easily lead to cross-cultural misunderstanding.<sup>64</sup>

## Redressive Politeness

I have labeled the third prominent type of politeness in the correspondence "redressive" politeness. This type corresponds closely to Brown and Levinson's "negative" politeness and is primarily concerned with the problems involved in intruding on another person's time and energy.<sup>65</sup> As Brown and Levinson suggest, although communal life is founded on cooperation with others, most individuals also feel entitled to a degree of personal autonomy. Indeed, we often conceive of social interaction in territorial terms. Certain social transactions are face-threatening precisely because they involve intruding on another individual's personal territory.<sup>66</sup> Such intrusions often require a degree of personal negotiation in order to ensure that they do not cause offense or provoke resentment. Linguistic strategies of politeness are one of the main ways in which these intrusions can be brokered.

A scene toward the start of Book 2 of Cicero's *De oratore* illustrates well the use of such strategies. Cicero depicts Q. Lutatius Catulus (cos. 102 B.C.) and his half-brother C. Julius Caesar Strabo (aed. 90 B.C.) arriving uninvited at the house of Licinius Crassus (cos. 95 B.C.), in the hope of taking part in the conversations on oratory that they believe will take place there that day. The two men make considerable efforts to mitigate any tension or inconvenience that their unexpected arrival might cause. Three times in just a few

lines (*De or.* 2.13–14) they acknowledge the potentially bothersome and intrusive consequences of their visit: *vel tu nos ineptos licet...vel molestos putes* (“and you may well think we are being tactless or troublesome”); *sed mehercule verentem tamen ne molesti vobis interveniremus* (“But on my word I was afraid nevertheless that our sudden appearance here might be troublesome to you”); *nos quidem, nisi forte molesti intervenimus, venisse delectat*. (“For our part we are delighted to be here, provided that our sudden appearance does not happen to be a nuisance.”) I label such remarks strategies of “redressive” politeness because their aim is to offer compensation for the face-threat (or intrusion) inherent in their arrival. They show respect to Crassus by making clear that his compliance is not taken for granted. Such strategies thus ease the tension provoked by the pair’s unexpected gate-crashing.<sup>67</sup>

As we shall see, redressive politeness can be offered before, after, or sometimes at the same time as, undertaking a face-threatening act. Much of its impulse derives ultimately from concerns with status and hierarchy. In many societies, access to powerful individuals is strictly limited, and those with great influence and prestige are regularly regarded as possessing a greater degree of personal inviolability. As Richard Saller notes (paraphrasing some of Goffman’s concepts): “the relative status of two parties in an interaction is asserted by the deferential liberties they take in invading each other’s private sphere, the party of higher status deserving the deference of greater distance.”<sup>68</sup> This link with personal status means that there is some conceptual overlap here with the politeness of respect. But the Roman material is best analyzed (I believe) by drawing a distinction between the more ceremonial politeness of respect, which derives from a broader cultural ethos (that is, the respect owed to individuals according to their age, gender, wealth, political position, and so on), and redressive politeness, which occurs in response to specific face-threatening acts. As I suggest in chapter 3, three tasks in particular seem to have proved especially face-threatening for powerful Roman patrons: making and refusing requests, and giving advice.

These three types of politeness, then, feature prominently in Cicero’s letters. But before we can analyze their deployment in detail we need to identify more precisely the role that letter-writing played in aristocratic life and how competence in polite manners was acquired.

## Letters in Roman Aristocratic Society

Letters played a vital role in the social business of the Roman “aristocrat”—a term that serves in the following chapters as a convenient label for members of the equestrian and senatorial orders. It is true, of course, that there were

many nuances of rank and prestige within these two groups. Some senators and equestrians were patrician, others plebeian; some had an established political pedigree, others such as Cicero were *novi homines*; some were *nobiles*, others not.<sup>69</sup> These differences would have been mutually recognized within the aristocracy and any changes closely monitored. Nevertheless, in comparison with the vast majority of the Roman population, all these individuals belonged to essentially the same financially and culturally privileged social stratum.<sup>70</sup> Given that the typical daily wage of a laborer in the Late Republic was around three sesterces a day, the property qualification of the equestrian (400,000 sesterces) would make men of this class the equivalent of today's multimillionaires.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, equestrians and senators had regular dealings with each other. The role of the *equites* as tax-collectors (*publicani*) in the provinces, their prominence in trade and banking, and their influence as jurors in the courts all necessitated regular face-to-face and epistolary communication with members of the senatorial class.<sup>72</sup> The two groups also occupied much the same cultural milieu. A man such as Catullus, for example, came from a family without an established political pedigree at Rome, yet enjoyed close daily associations with a range of powerful and privileged individuals.<sup>73</sup> Cicero's father, too, as an equestrian from Arpinum, evidently cultivated relationships with powerful senatorial families in Rome and provided his son with an entrée into politics there.<sup>74</sup> There should be little surprise then if we find a certain homogeneity in the epistolary language used across the senatorial and equestrian orders.

The French scholar Guy Achard has suggested that on average Cicero would have written around ten letters a day in the course of performing his duties as prominent patron and politician.<sup>75</sup> If this was the case, his output over a political career of twenty-five years or so would amount to some ninety thousand letters. Our extant corpus of around nine hundred letters would thus represent about only one percent of Cicero's epistolary activity during his lifetime. This is a striking statistic, both with regard to the time and energy devoted by aristocrats to letter-writing, and to the volume of material that has been lost.<sup>76</sup> Even if Achard's estimate is significantly exaggerated, it is clear that Cicero communicated with a wide range of individuals from the equestrian and senatorial classes on a regular basis. Nevertheless, despite this relatively extensive epistolary activity, Late Republican Rome remained essentially, in anthropological parlance, a "face-to-face" society. That is, most social and business matters in the city were conducted and negotiated through personal encounters, rather than through more impersonal, bureaucratic media. Various social institutions developed in the city to facilitate this face-to-face interaction. The morning *salutatio* and the dinner party provided important venues for social networking, and the forum acted as the

daily hub of social, legal, and business activity.<sup>77</sup> The fact that many aristocrats employed a *nomenclator* also reminds us that face-to-face meetings were the most usual mode of interaction between client and patron—although this post suggests, too, that an individual patron's influence often extended beyond the limits of real social familiarity.<sup>78</sup>

The main impetus for letter-writing within this face-to-face society came from imperial expansion and the ensuing importance of long-distance administrative communication.<sup>79</sup> Commanders of armies overseas now needed to communicate with the senate promptly and efficiently, and provincial governors had to administer their financial, political and family business from a distance. Significantly, however, when two powerful men were in the same city, there remained a strong expectation that they would conduct their business face-to-face. This expectation, of course, differs sharply from our own modern practices. Today, it is quite acceptable to conduct business with people in the same town by phone, letter, or e-mail.<sup>80</sup> Plutarch, however, reveals that this social expectation continued even into the Late Republic. Following a discussion of Julius Caesar's skill at horsemanship and his ability to dictate letters to two scribes at a time while on horseback, he remarks (Plutarch *Life of Caesar* 17):

λέγεται δὲ καὶ τὸ διὰ γραμμάτων τοῖς φίλοις ὁμιλεῖν Καίσαρα πρῶτον μηχανήσασθαι, τὴν κατὰ πρόσωπον ἔντευξιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπιγόντων τοῦ καιροῦ διὰ τε πληθὸς ἀσχολιῶν καὶ τῆς πόλεως τὸ μέγεθος μὴ περιμένοντος.

It is also reported that Caesar was the first to devise a means of conducting business with his friends by letter, since he could not wait for personal interviews on urgent matters, both because of his many responsibilities and because of the great size of the city.

This statement only makes sense if the majority of aristocrats did *not* communicate with each other by letter in any formal, organized way while they were in Rome.<sup>81</sup> Certainly, they might send brief notes to one another on matters of informal business. These would normally be scribbled on wax tablets and handed to a slave to deliver. Propertius and Ovid refer to this kind of message being exchanged between lovers;<sup>82</sup> and occasionally short messages of this type could be delivered to political colleagues and acquaintances, as we see from one of Cicero's letters (*Fam.* 6.18.1; SB 218, Cicero to Q. Lepta): *simul accepi a Seleuco tuo litteras, statim quaesivi e Balbo per codicillos quid esset in lege. rescripsit eos qui facerent praeconium vetari esse in decurionibus*. ("As soon as I received your letter via your man Seleucus, I at once sent a

note to Balbus enquiring what the law had to say. He replied that practicing auctioneers are debarred from membership of a town council.") Cicero here uses writing tablets (*codicillos*) to make a brief request for quite specific, technical information. Normally, however, business between powerful men was not conducted in this way. It would have been considered quite rude to try to broker a political or financial deal by letter, if both parties were in the same city. Significant or delicate social negotiations required interaction of a personal type. The point of Plutarch's remark is that Caesar initiated a decisive change in this customary way of doing things. (The element of careful planning is implied by the verb *μηχανήσασθαι*.) Given Caesar's absence from Rome during the 50s, this initiative was presumably introduced during his years as dictator. It would be interesting to know then how far, if at all, this innovative practice provoked resentment among his peers. For Caesar now risked appearing not as a respectful friend diligently conducting business with his peers but as a remote and high-handed autocrat dispensing instructions.

The letters in the extant Ciceronian corpus, then, were written because the correspondents were not located in the same town or city. Many letters thus feature aristocratic business that would otherwise have been conducted in a face-to-face setting.<sup>83</sup> This business often required a certain formality, and so, too, a degree of conventionalized politeness. But if, as our discussion in chapter 1 will suggest, these conventions were well known and widely used, how did aristocrats acquire their familiarity with them? How did this idiom of epistolary courtesy acquire its widespread currency among the elite?

## Learning to Write Like an Aristocrat

One possibility is that letter-writing constituted a distinct part of the upper-class educational curriculum. There are good reasons, however, to suppose that this was not the case. Discussions of letter-writing certainly feature in the Greek educational handbooks, some of which may have been written as early as the third century B.C.<sup>84</sup> But unfortunately it is not clear how well known these were to the Romans. Cicero shows some knowledge of a systematic categorization of letters and assumes the same in Scribonius Curio (*Fam.* 2.4.1; SB 48): *epistularum genera multa esse non ignoras*. ("You are quite aware that there are many categories of letter.") But the comments that he makes about these different types are disappointingly general. Some letters, he says, are intended primarily to convey information; a second type is intimate and lighthearted (*familiare et iocosum*); a third, austere and serious

(*severum et grave*). It is difficult on this evidence to conclude that Roman students were receiving detailed instruction in the kind of formal phrasing that we shall find in many of the letters of Cicero and his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, it is feasible that Greek collections of model letters such as we find in the *Typoi Epistolikoi* were available to teacher and student. Indeed, the first of this handbook's twenty-one types of letter contains a number of similarities with the Roman aristocratic letters that we find in the Ciceronian corpus.<sup>85</sup> It is categorized (Demetrius *Typoi Epistolikoi* 1) as the "friendly" letter (τύπος φιλικός), a type frequently used by men in prominent positions who need to write in a friendly manner, either to their inferiors or to powerful men of equal status such as military governors. The purpose of such letters is acknowledged to be essentially manipulative (Demetrius *Typoi Epistolikoi* 1): οὐδένα νομίζοντες ἀντερεῖν αὐτοῖς φιλικὰ γράφουσιν, ἄλλ' ὑπομενεῖν καὶ ποιήσιν περὶ ὧν γράφουσιν. ("They think that nobody will refuse them when they write in a friendly manner, but will rather submit and heed what they are writing.") There then follows an example of this kind of letter (Demetrius *Typoi Epistolikoi* 1):

εἰ καὶ πολὺ σου διάστημα τυγχάνω κεχωρισμένος, τῷ σώματι μόνον πάσχω τοῦτο. οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδέποτε δυνατόν ἐπιλαθέσθαι με σοῦ οὐδὲ τῆς γεγονυίας ἡμῖν ἐκ παίδων ἀνεγκλήτου συνανατροφῆς. εἰδὼς δὲ ἑμαυτὸν τὰ πρὸς σὲ γνησίως διακείμενον καὶ πάνυ τὸ σοὶ συμφέρον ἀπροφασίστως ὑπηρετήσαντα τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπέληφα καὶ σὲ περὶ ἐμοῦ γνώμην ἔχοντα κατὰ μηδὲν ἀντερεῖν πρὸς με.

Even though I have been separated from you for a long time, I suffer this in body only. For I can never forget you or the impeccable way we were reared together from childhood up. Knowing that I myself am genuinely concerned about your affairs, and that I have worked unhesitatingly for what is most advantageous to you, I have assumed that you, too, have the same opinion of me, and will refuse me in nothing.

There are some striking points of contact here with the Roman context. The letter features one powerful man writing to another; it makes some explicit claims of personal intimacy; and it attempts to negotiate a favor with the addressee. Its terminology and phrasing, however, are of course thoroughly Greek. It refers to the writer's past services to the addressee and to the childhood ties that bind them, but it does so in a way rather different from the appeals to *officia* and *necessitudo* that are so typical of Roman



letters. If Cicero and his contemporaries had been taught from this kind of Greek handbook, the context must have been adapted quite skillfully in order to incorporate the quintessentially Roman terminology of friendship. And yet, as Cicero's composition of *De Inventione* in the early 80s B.C. shows, Latin materials even for the study of rhetoric were in short supply at this time. We may have serious doubts, then, whether detailed and sophisticated educational texts were available for the rather less prestigious genre of letter-writing.<sup>86</sup>

Nevertheless, there would certainly have been Latin letters available for use as practical models for instruction. It is clear from passages in Plautus that certain epistolary conventions were already established by the second century B.C. At *Persians* 501–3, we find a conventionalized greeting at the beginning of a letter: *salutem dicit Toxilo Timarchides et familiae omni. si valetis, gaudeo, ego valeo recte*. ("Timarchides sends greetings to Toxilus and the whole household. If you are well, I am content. I am perfectly well myself.") And there is a polite request at the end (Plautus *Persians* 510–12): *operam atque hospitium ego isti praehiberi volo, qui tibi tabellas adfert. cura quae is volet, nam is mihi honores suae domi habuit maximos*. ("I wish the service and hospitality of our household to be extended to the bearer of this letter. Give his wishes your careful attention, for he has treated me with the greatest consideration in his own home.") These conventions are certainly rather simple in form and purpose, and some way removed from the degree of sophistication that we find in Cicero and his correspondents. But more ambitious examples almost certainly existed. Even though few "private" letters are extant from the pre-Ciceronian period, letter-writing (as we have seen) was an established form of communication, especially for politicians away from Rome on official business. The efficient aristocrat with numerous slaves at his disposal would doubtless have maintained some kind of system for keeping his correspondence in order.<sup>87</sup> He would thus have accumulated a stock of examples through which he, or a paid tutor, could introduce his son to aristocratic epistolary conventions.

This instruction, then, may have formed a distinct part of the boy's literary education; or it may have been treated as part of his more general initiation into aristocratic life, the so-called *tirocinium fori*.<sup>88</sup> In the latter case, we can perhaps imagine the son attending his father's administrative sessions, listening to letters being dictated to slave-scribes, and reading letters that his father had received from other aristocrats. The transmission of this feature of aristocratic manners would thus have relied more on the informal imitation of models drawn from real life than on a carefully organized theoretical system. Unfortunately, being informal, it is also to a large extent hidden from modern social historians.

But there is a further possibility that deserves serious consideration, not just because it may offer some insights into the process of the young aristocrat's socialization but also because it may help us to understand more fully the purpose and origin of formal epistolary language. The epistolary conventions that we shall identify may derive not solely from formal written instruction, but also from the rituals of face-to-face encounters that formed part of the politician's everyday life. That is, the language of letters reflects the type of language actually used by aristocrats in their meetings with each other.

There is good evidence that a high degree of ceremony could accompany formal encounters between powerful Roman aristocrats. One striking example is provided by Plutarch's description of a tense meeting that took place in Galatia between Pompey and Lucullus in 66 B.C. Lucullus, much against his will, had been forced by the senate to relinquish to Pompey his command of the campaign against Mithridates. Their initial meeting following Pompey's arrival was not surprisingly an awkward affair, and yet Plutarch relates that it was conducted at first with great civility (Plutarch *Life of Pompey* 31):

οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὴν πρώτην ἔντευξιν ὡς ἐνῆν μάλιστα πολιτικῶς καὶ φιλοφρόνως ἐποίησαντο, μεγαλύνοντες ἀλλήλων τὰ ἔργα, καὶ συνηδόμενοι τοῖς κατορθώμασιν.

Their first interview, however, was conducted with all possible civility and friendliness, each magnifying the other's exploits and congratulating him on his successes.

Subsequent conversations, however, were rather different in tone (Plutarch *Life of Pompey* 31):

ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις πρὸς οὐδὲν ἐπιεικὲς οὐδὲ μέτριον συμβάντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ λοιδορήσαντες, ὁ μὲν εἰς φιλαργυρίαν τὸν Λεύκολλον, ὁ δ' εἰς φιλαρχίαν ἐκείνον, ὑπὸ τῶν φίλων μόλις διελύθησαν.

But in the conferences which followed they could come to no fair or reasonable agreement; indeed, they actually abused each other, Pompey charging Lucullus with love of money, and Lucullus charging Pompey with love of power, and only with difficulty were they separated by their friends.

This account illustrates several important points. First, it provides a concrete example of polite language being used to create a neutral space in which

potentially awkward business can be discussed. In this case, the discussions quickly degenerated into a slanging match; but the initial language of courtesy opened up at least the possibility of a diplomatic resolution of their antagonisms. Politeness contributes here to the process of political negotiation.

Second, it is likely that many other encounters between powerful men adopted the same formal tenor that we see in the initial courteous language of this example. We hear for instance of Q. Hortensius (son of the famous orator and praetor perhaps in 45 B.C.) employing respectful language during a visit paid to Cicero's wife Terentia (*Att.* 10.16.5; SB 208):

*sed, cum redeo, Hortensius venerat et ad Terentiam salutatum deverterat. sermone erat usus honorifico erga me. iam eum, ut puto, videbo; misit enim puerum se ad me venire.*

But when I'd returned, I found that Hortensius had arrived and turned off specifically to pay a visit to Terentia. He had spoken of me in very respectful terms. I expect I shall be seeing him soon, as he has sent a boy to tell me he is coming.

Hortensius' use of such language suggests that their meeting was marked by a certain formality; less a cosy chat perhaps than the kind of polite reception regularly shown to powerful visitors at the morning *salutatio*. Indeed, the phrase *sermo honorificus* seems to refer to the kind of language that I have categorized as the "politeness of respect." Evidently, an important feature of polite conversation was the expression of respect and esteem for one's acquaintances.<sup>89</sup> Terentia's report to Cicero of these particular details shows the social significance attached to such courtesies; and Cicero himself of course repeats them in turn to Atticus. (See chapter 2 for further discussion of this and Cicero's later meeting with Hortensius.)

A further example illustrates the importance of these courtesies. In June 44 B.C. Cicero complains to Atticus about the behavior of a certain Sara, one of Cleopatra's agents in Rome (*Att.* 15.15.2; SB 393):

*Saram autem, praeterquam quod nefarium hominem, cognovi praeterea in me contumacem. semel eum omnino domi meae vidi; cum φιλοφρόνως ex eo quaererem quid opus esset, Atticum se dixit quaerere.*

As for Sara, in addition to the fact that he's a despicable individual, I found him arrogant toward me personally. I only ever saw him once at my home. When I asked him in a carefully courteous fashion how I could help him, he replied that he was looking for Atticus.

Sara's general lack of respect toward Cicero seems almost calculated. He makes no effort to attend the ex-consul's morning receptions during his stay in Rome; and on the only occasion he does so, he behaves with spectacular rudeness. It is important to note, however, that Cicero claims to have made a special effort to adopt an amiable and helpful manner during this encounter. Indeed, he uses in this connection the same adverb (φιλοφρόνως) as Plutarch does in his depiction of the courtesies exchanged between Pompey and Lucullus discussed earlier. We can probably infer then that the orator employed a few phrases of gracious politeness as he greeted his influential foreign visitor. Sara, however, seems not to have reciprocated even this basic courtesy. Instead, with a breathtaking lack of tact, he declares that his only reason for calling is the hope of seeing Atticus. Cicero, he implies, is scarcely worth his attention. This ungracious behavior draws down on him the charge of arrogance, the same fault that Cicero ascribes to Brutus in the passage quoted at the start of this discussion.<sup>90</sup>

It may well be a mistake, then, to view the polite conventions that appear in aristocratic letters as solely the product of a highly organized literary education. Much probably derives, too, from the realities of face-to-face aristocratic interaction. It is clear that Cicero's son, for example, even as a teenager was familiar with the conventions of polite language, and he presumably acquired much of this knowledge of aristocratic manners from attending his father's morning *salutatio* and accompanying him on visits to political allies.<sup>91</sup> Cicero himself would have acquired a familiarity with these manners while studying civil law as a young man with the Mucii Scaevolae, and by observing his political mentor, Licinius Crassus (cos. 95 B.C.).<sup>92</sup> Such firsthand encounters with self-important, not to say arrogant, grandees no doubt helped to drive home the significance of these conventional rituals of politeness. Quite possibly, some specific instruction was needed to help the teenager adapt the face-to-face conventions of politeness into acceptable epistolary ones; but this written element should be viewed as a minor part of the much wider process of aristocratic socialization.

Indeed, Cicero's discussion of polite manners at *De Officiis* 1.126–49 implicitly recognizes that such social skills were generally transmitted informally.<sup>93</sup> The discussion is influenced in part by his Greek philosophical models, but the principles that Cicero lays down are almost certainly codified here in Latin for the first time.<sup>94</sup> Previously such skills would have been acquired primarily through the observation and imitation of actual aristocratic behavior. Cicero claims, for example, that Laelia, daughter of the cultured C. Laelius (cos. 140 B.C.), acquired through daily association something of the elegance of her father's speech.<sup>95</sup> It is through this kind of cross-generational interaction that the oral conventions of aristocratic politeness would have

been disseminated.<sup>96</sup> Thus, we need not assume the existence of a highly organized and uniform curriculum in letter-writing in order to account for the widespread use by Roman aristocrats of a shared idiom of politeness. The most reasonable explanation seems to be a shared familiarity with the polite manners that prevailed in such circles, and access to actual letters exchanged by family members and mentors.

It is clear, too, that this kind of instruction was not restricted exclusively to young men. We know that a volume of letters from Cicero to Caerellia, a well-connected female acquaintance with philosophical interests, was preserved in antiquity (letters to which she presumably replied).<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Terentia and Tullia sent letters to Cicero and occasionally to close family acquaintances.<sup>98</sup> The tablets from Vindolanda also preserve Latin letters exchanged between women.<sup>99</sup> Letters, too, from Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, have been preserved. Even if these latter are forgeries (as has been claimed), clearly the notion of an aristocratic woman writing letters did not seem implausible to a Roman readership.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, it is true to say that the world of aristocratic correspondence presented by the extant letters is a predominantly male one—especially the more formal epistolary exchanges that constitute the focus of this study. These letters present the wranglings and negotiations of powerful men in the essentially masculine sphere of Roman politics.<sup>101</sup> For this reason, the pronoun “he” is used in the following discussion when generalizing about Cicero’s correspondents and the writing of formal letters. This is partly a matter of convenience; but to phrase matters in a gender-neutral way also would risk misrepresenting Cicero’s epistolary context.

Finally, a few words are necessary about the circulation and intended readership of the letters written by Cicero and his powerful acquaintances. The subject is a complex one, not least because the letters do not fall neatly into the categories of “public” and “private” correspondence.<sup>102</sup> Certainly many of Cicero’s letters to Atticus, especially those containing intimate self-revelation and confidential political discussions, were meant to be read by their recipient alone. These examples correspond most closely to our modern category of “private” letters.<sup>103</sup> Conversely, we have letters that were explicitly intended for a broad public audience (letters to the senate, for example, or the magistrates of an Italian town).<sup>104</sup> We also know, however, that letters addressed to specific individuals would regularly be circulated among friends and acquaintances. The most direct evidence for this practice is provided by the letters of Caesar, Pompey, and others that have been preserved in Cicero’s correspondence with Atticus.<sup>105</sup> Cicero seems to have sent copies of these letters to Atticus as a matter of course, with no apparent concern regarding the propriety of doing so. Indeed, political spats were often the

subject of much lively gossip and discussion among the aristocracy, and any letters that contributed to this rumor-mongering are likely to have passed quickly through the hands of interested parties. (See, for example, Cicero's correspondence with C. Matius and Appius Claudius Pulcher discussed in the following chapters.) It seems likely then that much aristocratic correspondence was written with an awareness that it could be distributed more widely beyond the named addressee.<sup>106</sup> Such letters can be classified perhaps as "semipublic," although in each case the writer could not be sure exactly how many other people would have access to it, or who precisely these additional readers would be.

The wider readership of such letters has important ramifications for our understanding of Cicero's deployment of politeness. Because the social negotiations included within these letters were open to the scrutiny of others, issues of respect and *dignitas* were all the more pressing. How the writer treated his addressee in such situations took on a broader relevance and would have been monitored with interest. Indeed, at times we get the impression that Cicero wanted not only the named recipient of the letter to appreciate his displays of respect but a wider readership of peers, too.

## Linguistic Politeness and Ideals of Sophistication

The semipublic nature of these epistolary encounters also made them an excellent venue for "social performance."<sup>107</sup> Linguistic politeness not only helped in the cultivation of personal relationships; if deployed with discernment and finesse, it could furnish proof of the writer's social accomplishment and *savoir-faire*. Elegant compliments and generous displays of respect, for example, allowed the aristocrat to depict himself as a man of poise and magnanimity, quite above the factional rivalry that typified Roman politics. To this extent, linguistic politeness could contribute to an aristocrat's self-fashioning as a man of sophistication and *urbanitas*.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the exchange of polished, witty letters could help to cultivate a sense of community and camaraderie between like-minded educated individuals.<sup>109</sup> In such instances, the adoption of an elaborate form of civility functioned as a kind of super-strategy of affiliative politeness. It reinforced the writer and addressee's membership within an in-group of the sophisticated elite.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time, such claims to sophistication were subjective and open to contestation. Indeed, Cicero's scrupulous use of politeness may well be one of the targets of Catullus' Poem 49. Catullus incorporates into this squib several features that, as we shall see in chapter 1, are typical of Cicero's epistolary

etiquette: the poem takes the form of a polite thank you note; it employs a formal mode of address (*Marce Tulli*); and it offers (with ironic intent) solicitously exaggerated compliments (see, e.g., *disertissime Romuli nepotum* and *optimus omnium patronus*). Catullus may thus be trying not just to puncture Cicero's social pretensions in general, but the punctiliousness of his polite manners in particular.<sup>111</sup>

At a more fundamental level, the self-conscious civilities prevalent in many of Cicero's letters were always open to attack as affectations that went against the traditional Roman value of austere plain-speaking.<sup>112</sup> Such ideological tussles were perhaps inevitable. We find similar tensions arising at various times throughout European history. Robespierre, for example, rejected "polite" modes of address in the aftermath of the French Revolution; George Fox and the Quakers in the 1650s challenged the ceremonial forms of speech employed and expected by those in power; and the rise of Romanticism in the late eighteenth century called into question the apparent affectations promoted by prevailing codes of manners.<sup>113</sup> Not everyone then would have admired or wanted to emulate Cicero's careful use of politeness.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, as we shall see, the individual conventions that he deploys are relatively widespread. Much of his own distinctive style derives from the extent to which he uses them and the elaborate care with which they are embellished.

It is frustrating that we cannot trace in any detail the cultural development of this linguistic politeness prior to Cicero's time. So few private letters survive from the third and second centuries B.C. that the best that we can manage is surmise and conjecture.<sup>115</sup> We know that the elite during this period of imperial expansion took a growing interest in aestheticism and sophisticated culture;<sup>116</sup> and it seems unlikely that the many conventionalized phrases in use during the Late Republic sprang suddenly into existence during Cicero's lifetime. Indeed, the need to negotiate political alliances was a constant feature of upper-class life. It seems reasonable then to suppose that such gambits were familiar to previous generations.<sup>117</sup> The most plausible reconstruction is a general continuity over several generations, varied by short-lived linguistic fashions.<sup>118</sup>

This question of the development of polite conventions also invites us to look ahead to the post-Ciceronian period. In the letters of Pliny and Fronto we can discern a degree of both continuity and change. Powerful aristocrats in the imperial period still had duties to perform as patrons, so it is no surprise to find in Pliny's correspondence requests and recommendations, together with letters that offer thanks, appreciation and congratulations.<sup>119</sup> In these, Pliny uses some of the same vocabulary of esteem and affection as Cicero;<sup>120</sup> but there are some differences as well.<sup>121</sup> The politeness of respect

appears in its most careful form perhaps in Pliny's letters to his wife's grandfather, Calpurnius Fabatus. This is one relationship in which he has to employ a distinctly deferential manner, and the ways in which he does so would repay closer study.<sup>122</sup> Pliny's correspondence in Book 10 with the emperor Trajan provides of course another case where hierarchical concerns intrude significantly. Here on occasions Pliny leans on certain formulaic phrases;<sup>123</sup> but most striking are his repeated invocations of the emperor's *indulgentia*, a feature that highlights the significant shift in power-relations ushered in by the imperial autocracy.<sup>124</sup>

Despite these elements of continuity, however, it is important to recognize that Pliny's extant correspondence is qualitatively different from the Ciceronian corpus. For the most part, Pliny's letters are carefully polished, literary products, limited to a single thematic topic and designed to depict their author as a cultured and humane individual.<sup>125</sup> There are few cases in which he tries to negotiate difficult political business with powerful acquaintances.<sup>126</sup> The games of politeness and politics that we find in Cicero's letters are thus entirely absent from the Plinian material. To this extent, much of the following discussion has little direct application to this later correspondence.<sup>127</sup>

## Organization of the Following Chapters

The first task in our analysis of Cicero's letters is to identify the most commonly deployed strategies of politeness. Chapter 1 focuses primarily on strategies used to convey respect and the ways in which these are often combined with strategies of affiliative politeness. As we shall see, many such strategies were conventionalized to a degree and familiar to a range of Cicero's correspondents. Only by first establishing these epistolary norms can we appreciate how they are manipulated on other occasions for particular effect. In chapter 2, some of these manipulative uses are examined in detail, especially the ambiguities inherent in affiliative politeness and its use of polite fictions. Chapter 3 examines the role of redressive politeness in the correspondence, in particular the challenges involved in giving advice to powerful acquaintances. As we shall see, dealing with self-important aristocrats could be a tricky business, and redressive politeness played a crucial part in facilitating many epistolary encounters. Even so, conflict and confrontation could arise on occasion, and chapter 4 considers the kind of language that was considered appropriate at these moments of tension. Although the façade of politeness had to be jettisoned at times in order to respond vigorously and decisively to insulting treatment, certain principles of etiquette



usually determined exactly how abrasive or restrained this language could be. Finally, in chapter 5, I examine some of the ploys of politeness and politics undertaken by several correspondents following Caesar's assassination. As this discussion suggests, the polite fictions and enthusiastic displays of respect that were employed for generally positive purposes in normal circumstances could take on a rather more sinister and deceptive aspect in a time of crisis.

# 1

## Doing Aristocratic Business

### *Affiliative Politeness and the Politeness of Respect*

This chapter examines some of the most distinctive strategies of politeness used by Cicero as he conducts his everyday business as influential patron and politician. Many of these tasks—requesting favors, writing recommendations, offering thanks and congratulations, cultivating alliances and so on—were inherently face-threatening. Concerns with status and hierarchy were always implicit in such exchanges, and the politeness of respect played an important role in their management. At the same time, it often was desirable to try to promote a genial and cooperative relationship with the addressee. Stylized strategies of affiliative politeness therefore also played a prominent part in these letters, although the extent to which they were deployed could vary considerably.

The following discussion is organized around seven letters. Two of these (from Cicero to C. Matius and M. Licinius Crassus) are well known and have received considerable attention from modern scholars. The other five are probably not so familiar. Indeed, in many ways they are rather mundane. And yet it is this very ordinariness that makes them so useful for our present purpose. These letters help us to gain a sense of the norms of politeness that usually prevailed in these typical aristocratic encounters. This baseline is crucial for helping us to understand some of the more complex letters discussed in the following chapters.

Most of the strategies analyzed here are conventionalized to a degree. Indeed, it is their repeated association with formal situations that enables them to function as a show of respect to the addressee.<sup>1</sup> From a methodological perspective,

however, the identification of these conventions poses certain problems. It is not always easy to judge whether the repeated deployment of an expression is merely a matter of chance and personal idiosyncrasy, or whether it forms part of a wider pattern of conventionalized usage. The main obstacle in this respect is the small sample size of our extant correspondence. From one perspective the nine hundred or so surviving letters can seem an intimidatingly large and varied body of material to get to grips with. But, from the modern statistician's point of view, this sample is disturbingly meager, all the more so if we discount the correspondence with Atticus, which is in many ways *sui generis*. Moreover, the surviving material from Cicero's fellow correspondents represents an even smaller proportion of the many thousands of letters that they would have written during their political careers. In short, we are trying to reconstruct a jigsaw of aristocratic politeness that has most of its pieces missing.

Nevertheless, the situation is not entirely hopeless. On several occasions, as we shall see, Cicero explicitly identifies specific expressions as conventional. In other instances, a convention is confirmed for us by the irritation provoked when it is omitted.<sup>2</sup> The use of an expression by numerous correspondents other than Cicero himself also suggests a degree of conventionalization.<sup>3</sup> And, finally, the repeated use of certain phrases by Cicero himself may likewise indicate a degree of conventionalization, although if no parallels can be found elsewhere, there is always the possibility that this usage constitutes an idiosyncratic verbal tic. In general, however, most of the strategies discussed here can be shown to be part of a wider aristocratic idiom.

Although the following discussion is based around seven specific letters, at several places I use these as a springboard for the detailed consideration of individual strategies of politeness. These strategies match in part those identified by Sophie Roesch in her brief survey of politeness in the correspondence;<sup>4</sup> but by examining them in the context of specific letters, I hope to present a more nuanced picture of their use. This type of analysis requires a close engagement with the text of individual letters, and the pages that follow include both the Latin and an English translation of relevant passages in order to help the reader track the argument more precisely. For ease of reference and readability, the various strategies discussed are also gathered together and catalogued in the appendix.

## Letter 1: Cicero to M. Acilius Caninus (*Fam.* 13.33; SB 304)

Providing acquaintances with letters of recommendation was an important feature of Roman patronage, and Cicero's extant letters of this type confirm that he enjoyed a remarkably broad network of social relationships.<sup>5</sup> Such

networks would have been reproduced many times again across the aristocratic class as a whole.<sup>6</sup> It is not surprising then that a highly conventionalized set of expressions arose in order to facilitate this common aspect of formal aristocratic business. A convenient example is provided by a letter written by Cicero to M. Acilius Caninus, probably in 46 B.C. (*Fam.* 13.33; SB 304):<sup>7</sup>

*Cn. Otacilio Nasone utor familiarissime, ita prorsus et illius ordinis nullo familiarius; nam et humanitate eius et probitate in consuetudine cottidiana magno opere delector. nihil iam opus est exspectare te quibus eum verbis tibi commendem quo sic utar ut scripsi. habet is in provincia tua negotia quae procurant liberti, Hilarus, Antigonus, Demonstratus; quos tibi negotiaque omnia Nasonis non secus commendo ac si mea essent. gratissimum mihi feceris si intellexero hanc commendationem magnum apud te pondus habuisse.*

I am on very familiar terms with Cn. Otacilius Naso—as familiar in fact as with anyone of his rank. In our daily contacts I am thoroughly delighted by his amiable and upright character. You will not need to wait and see what words I use to recommend one with whom I am on such terms as this. He has affairs of business in your province, to which his freedmen Hilarus, Antigonus, and Demonstratus are attending. I recommend to you these persons and all Naso's affairs exactly as though they were my own. You will oblige me deeply if I find that this recommendation has carried much weight with you.

Various conventionalized elements are evident here: the assertion of Cicero's relationship with the recommendee (*Cn. Otacilio Nasone utor familiarissime*); his statement of the recommendation's relevance (*habet is in provincia tua negotia*); the formal commendation (*quos tibi negotiaque omnia Nasonis non secus commendo ac si mea essent*); and his expression of appreciation (*gratissimum mihi feceris si*). These various phrases are semi-formulaic to the extent that they are repeated virtually verbatim in numerous other letters of recommendation.<sup>8</sup>

At the practical level, the availability of a familiar stock of vocabulary for such occasions makes the process of composition much easier. The writer does not need to spend a great deal of time searching for apposite phrases.<sup>9</sup> But it is important to appreciate too the sociolinguistic dimension of this kind of letter and its language. For the giving and receiving of recommendations was an inherently face-threatening business. The writer for his part is staking a claim to a degree of social influence. If this influence is seen not

to count for much with the addressee, the writer risks humiliation. Hence the conventional request in such letters for the addressee to make it clear to all concerned that the request has carried some weight.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the addressee himself is put in a potentially awkward position. Certainly the request is complimentary in that it explicitly acknowledges his power and influence. But it also imposes a burden that may well be unwelcome. The recommendee meanwhile is caught in the middle, having already risked rejection in his initial request to the writer, and now facing rebuff from the addressee.

In such a situation, the availability of conventionalized phrases provides a welcome structure that helps the interaction to proceed in a familiar and appropriate fashion. Its language fixes the three parties concerned in a relationship of respectful formality in which each plays an established and mutually understood role. Moreover, in deploying these phrases, the writer demonstrates his familiarity with prevailing mores and procedures. As Matsumoto notes with regard to conventionalized linguistic elements in Japanese culture: "such formulaic expressions are strategically indispensable since they reinforce the impression of behavior in accordance with the social expectation in the situation in question, and demonstrate the speaker's understanding of the sociocultural system."<sup>11</sup> As perfunctory as many such recommendations are, their language nevertheless indicates the writer's adherence to established social rituals and so implicitly demonstrates a sense of respect and *verecundia*. Moreover, by performing this task competently the writer also tacitly asserts his rightful membership within a socially privileged group. Only individuals of a certain standing and influence participated in these roles.<sup>12</sup>

These dimensions of the conventionalized language of recommendations become clearer when we consider Cicero's occasional divergence from this customary approach. In 45 B.C., for example, we find him writing a recommendation to Julius Caesar on behalf of a certain Precilius, a man (probably) of equestrian status (*Fam.* 13.15; SB 317).<sup>13</sup> He starts off in a conventional and predictable way (*Fam.* 13.15.1): <P.> *Precilium tibi commendo unice*. ("I recommend P. Precilius to you exceptionally highly.") And he continues with expressions of esteem that are similarly formulaic: *quem... propter eius modestiam, humanitatem, animum et amorem erga me singularem mirifice diligo*. ("I have the most remarkable esteem for him on account of his modesty, amiability, disposition and extraordinary affection toward me.")<sup>14</sup> At this point, however, the letter takes an unexpected turn: *em hic [ille] est de illis maxime qui irridere atque obiurgare me solitus est quod me non tecum, praesertim cum abs te honorificentissime invitarer, coniungerem*. ("Would you believe it? This is the man who above all others used to mock and scold me because I

would not ally myself with you, even though you invited me to do so in most respectful terms.”)<sup>15</sup> The colloquial interjection *em* shifts the linguistic register sharply.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Cicero introduces an unusual note of self-deprecation as he depicts himself as the object of the recommendee’s criticisms. This conscious divergence from the usual linguistic formality is then reinforced by his quotation of a Homeric phrase: ἄλλ’ ἐμὸν οὐ ποτε θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔπειθεν. (“But the heart within my breast he never persuaded.”) Indeed, he goes on to incorporate into the letter four further quotes from Homer and another from Euripides.

This departure from the customary format is energetically affiliative. Cicero quickly dispenses with language appropriate to the roles of Caesar and himself as powerful patrons, and switches instead to a livelier manner designed to engage with the dictator on a less formal level. Shackleton Bailey has identified his motive for doing so: rumors of the orator’s hostility toward Caesar had recently been put in circulation by his nephew Quintus.<sup>17</sup> He is therefore keen to offer some reassurances of his loyalty. Certain prominent aristocrats (he admits) have been courting him (*etiamnum gloria volunt incendere*); but he claims to be entirely impervious to their overtures (*sed me minus iam movent, ut vides*). The letter’s style cleverly reinforces this aim. The Greek quotations not only allow Cicero to address some quite serious political issues with a degree of wry detachment; they also celebrate and reinforce his intellectual kinship with Caesar.<sup>18</sup> The two men enjoy the kind of relationship (he implies) that allows them to engage in this kind of literary *jeu d’esprit*. Cicero thus presents himself as quite unlike the resentful, brooding revolutionary of recent rumor. Moreover, this friendly, urbane demeanor tacitly invites a reciprocal manner from the dictator.

This gambit is not without its risks, however. Caesar may well consider the rumors of Cicero’s subversive activities too serious to be waved away in such an informal manner. Indeed, this deliberately lighthearted approach could be construed as an insult to Caesar’s position and importance as patron. (Precilius, too, could be legitimately concerned at this apparently cavalier approach to his career prospects.) Ultimately, the matter is one of social discernment. Cicero has to judge the degree of formality or familiarity that the situation permits. Presumably in this case he was confident that Caesar would appreciate the wit and intention of his remarks. Nevertheless, as we shall see in this and the following chapter, such energetic uses of affiliative politeness always risked rebuff. The addressee could choose not to reciprocate the friendly manner initiated by this kind of language. Indeed, on occasions a distinctly formal linguistic style could be cultivated in order to convey a retreat from intimacy. A couple of years earlier in 47 B.C., for example, as Cicero waited anxiously in Brundisium watching the civil war

sputter on uncertainly, he wrote ominously to Atticus (*Att.* 11.9.1; SB 220): *cottidie iam Balbi ad me litterae languidiores multaeque multorum ad illum fortasse contra me*. ("Balbus' letters grow more indifferent every day, and perhaps many letters from many people are being sent to Caesar attacking me.") It is reasonable to assume that Balbus' letters in this case were perfectly polite and respectful. Evidently, however, he no longer made an effort to employ the kind of affiliative pleasantries that had previously been usual between them. At times politics and politeness could be closely entwined.

In most cases, however, letters of recommendation employed a recognizably formal set of conventionalized phrases, whose main purpose was to establish the degree of respect appropriate to this form of social transaction. To this extent such phrases form part of the politeness of respect often deployed in Cicero's correspondence.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, they would have constituted a significant feature of the epistolary etiquette that a young aristocrat was expected to acquire in anticipation of his role as social patron. This language of recommendations, however, is relatively self-contained and restricted in its sphere of use. Rather more interesting is the language generated by other aspects of the Roman aristocrat's everyday social business. As we shall see, these situations produced a range of more or less conventionalized strategies that helped powerful grandees negotiate these often quite delicate affairs.

## Letter 2: Cicero to L. Culleolus (*Fam.* 13.41; SB 54)

Requesting favors, like writing recommendations, was a regular part of the Roman patron's social obligations. Conventionalized phrases were regularly employed to facilitate the task, and here, too, their use helped to establish a formal tone that conveyed an appropriate degree of respect to the addressee. A letter to L. Culleolus (*Fam.* 13.41; SB 54) illustrates many of the strategies of politeness that Cicero would regularly incorporate into this kind of social transaction.<sup>20</sup>

In an earlier letter (*Fam.* 13.42; SB 53) Cicero had requested Culleolus' help in expediting the business affairs of L. Lucceius, who was involved in a dispute with the people of Byllis.<sup>21</sup> In this subsequent letter, he writes to thank Culleolus for his help so far, while also asking him to continue with his support as best he can (*Fam.* 13.41.1–2; SB 54):

*quae fecisti L. Luccei causa scire te plane volo te homini gratissimo commodasse; et cum ipsi quae fecisti pergrata sunt, tum Pompeius, quotienscumque me vidit (videt autem saepe), gratias tibi agit singularis. addo etiam illud, quod tibi iucundissimum esse certo scio, me ipsum ex*

*tua erga Lucceium benignitate maxima voluptate adfici. quod superest, quamquam mihi non est dubium quin, cum antea nostra causa, nunc iam etiam tuae constantiae gratia mansurus sis in eadem ista liberalitate, tamen abs te vehementer etiam atque etiam peto ut ea quae initio ostendisti, deinceps fecisti, ad exitum augeri et cumulari per te velis. id et Lucceio et Pompeio valde gratum fore teque apud eos praeclare positurum confirmo et spondeo.*

I certainly want you to be assured that in doing what you have done on behalf of L. Lucceius you have obliged a man who is most grateful. What you have done is very welcome to Lucceius himself, and Pompey, whenever he sees me (and indeed he sees me often) expresses to you the most extraordinary thanks. I will add what I feel sure will be highly agreeable to you, that I myself have taken the greatest pleasure in your kindness to Lucceius. As for the future, while I have no doubt that you will continue in your generosity, doing for the sake of your own consistency what you had earlier done for our sakes, nevertheless I earnestly and repeatedly ask you to be inclined to add at the conclusion some enhancing, crowning touch to those promises you made at the outset and then fulfilled. I confirm and pledge that this will be very welcome to both Lucceius and Pompey, and that it will put you in an excellent position with them.

The nature of the request is comparatively modest and employs many of the basic building blocks of epistolary politeness. These are best approached by identifying individual strategies and considering how they are deployed elsewhere in the correspondence.

### *Expressions of thanks and appreciation*

Expressions of appreciation typically constitute the small change of polite interaction whenever human activity relies on the cooperation of others (which is to say, most of the time).<sup>22</sup> Two examples using the adjective *gratus* appear in this letter to Culleolus (*pergrata sunt* and *id et Lucceio et Pompeio valde gratum fore*), and variations of these phrases appear throughout Cicero's correspondence.<sup>23</sup> Their use does not by itself indicate a highly formal linguistic register. As usual, much depends on the context and accompanying language. Cicero employs such phrases regularly in his letters to Atticus in order to convey his appreciation of recent favors in a brief, understated way.<sup>24</sup> In other circumstances, however, an especially punctilious attention to expressing thanks can characterize the writer as a person of



careful and polite manners, one who does not allow even the smallest favor to pass unacknowledged.

This aspect of Roman civility is neatly illustrated by a sequence of remarks discernible in Cicero's correspondence with Lentulus Spinther in 56 B.C.<sup>25</sup> Cicero notes at *Fam.* 1.7.1 (SB 18): *ad me scribis gratum tibi esse quod crebro certior per me fias de omnibus rebus*. ("You write to me that you are grateful to be kept informed so frequently through me on all matters.") From this we infer that Lentulus himself had politely expressed his appreciation of Cicero's efforts to keep him abreast of events in Rome. Cicero in turn now carefully acknowledges Lentulus' appreciation. This solicitous manner, while civil and urbane, is precisely what one would not expect in a relaxed and casual setting. The tenor rather is one of polite but slightly stiff formality.

Much the same applies to the use of the phrase *gratias ago* (and its variants) in aristocratic correspondence. Explicit expressions of thanks formally acknowledge that the writer has incurred a social debt, and such assertions played an important part in the calculus of *beneficia* dispensed and *officia* incurred within the ethical system of Roman friendship.<sup>26</sup> Cicero, for example, not only takes care to acknowledge the help given to him by certain acquaintances while in exile; he makes a point of telling them that it was his wife Terentia who let him know of their kind offices.<sup>27</sup> A similar cycle of thanksgiving and appreciation is evident from the following remark in a letter to Trebianus (*Fam.* 6.11.2; SB 224): *Vestorius, noster familiaris, ad me scripsit te mihi maximas gratias agere. haec praedicatio tua mihi valde grata est*. ("Our friend Vestorius has written to me that you express the utmost gratitude to me. Such acknowledgment on your part is very welcome to me.")<sup>28</sup> In this case, Trebianus has expressed thanks for Cicero's efforts to a mutual friend Vestorius; Vestorius has passed these on to Cicero; and Cicero now completes the circle by expressing his appreciation to Trebianus.<sup>29</sup>

The formality of these careful expressions of thanks is further illustrated by an exchange between Cicero and Q. Cornificius. Toward the start of March 43 B.C., Cornificius, governor in Africa, had evidently sent Cicero a letter in which he asserted his commitment to the senatorial cause (*societatem rei publicae conservandae*) and requested help in obtaining financial aid for his activities in the province.<sup>30</sup> In his reply, Cicero remarks (*Fam.* 12.28.2; SB 374): *gratum etiam illud, quod mihi tuo nomine gratias agendas non putas; nec enim id inter nos facere debemus*. ("I am also grateful you feel that expressions of thanks to me on your account are not necessary—you and I do not have to do that between ourselves.") Cornificius has apparently suggested that there is in fact no need for him to offer explicit, formal thanks to Cicero. Cicero takes this remark as a compliment (*gratum etiam illud*). By eschewing this civility, Cornificius demonstrates not ingratitude, but an agreeable

belief that their relationship has moved beyond such awkward formalities. The two men enjoy such a solid understanding that these tokens of appreciation can be taken for granted.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, Cicero carefully acknowledges the compliment and scrupulously endorses it: their intimacy, he avers, does indeed make such remarks unnecessary (*nec enim id inter nos facere debemus*). Clearly then punctilious offerings of thanks were regularly employed in contexts of high formality. In these situations, an aristocrat's ostentatious concern with his various duties and obligations helped to demonstrate both his own *verecundia* and his respect for the addressee's social position.

Not surprisingly, in most cases the failure to offer thanks drew sharp rebukes. In 50 B.C., for example, Cicero complains (perhaps a little unfairly) that Atticus' freedman Dionysius has not formally passed on his thanks following a stay at the orator's home (*Att. 7.7.1; SB 130*):<sup>32</sup>

*"Dionysius, vir optimus, ut mihi quoque est perspectus, et doctissimus tuique amantissimus, Romam venit XV Kal. Ian. et litteras a te mihi reddidit." tot enim verba sunt de Dionysio in epistula tua; illud, putato, non adscribis, "et tibi gratias egit." atqui certe ille agere debuit et, si esset factum, quae tua est humanitas, adscripsisses.*

"The excellent Dionysius, as I also know him to be, a fine scholar too with a warm affection for you, arrived in Rome on 16 December and gave me a letter from you." That, no more and no less, is what you write about Dionysius in your letter. You don't add, let us say, "and he expressed his gratitude to you." And yet he certainly ought to have done so, and, if he had, you would have mentioned it, such is your sense of courtesy.

We can see here that Atticus has in fact made some attempt to assure Cicero of Dionysius' goodwill (note the phrase *tuique amantissimus*). But evidently the orator expects something more explicit, something that shows a more formal recognition of his services to the man. Indeed, his sense of grievance highlights well the core function of such appreciation: to convey a degree of respect appropriate to the prevailing social hierarchy. From Cicero's perspective, a humble freedman was all the more obliged to express thanks for a senator's assistance. Dionysius' failure to do so demonstrates a lack of due deference.

The social complexities involved in expressing thanks are further illustrated by an incident in March 49 B.C. when Cicero was coming under pressure from Pompey and Caesar to declare his political allegiance in the brewing civil war. Cicero remarks to Atticus that he feels uncomfortable

about the enthusiastic thanks that Caesar has recently bestowed on him for not yet having left Italy to join Pompey (*Att.* 9.6.6; SB 172): *illum maiores mihi gratias agere quam vellem*. ("[Caesar] expresses greater gratitude to me than I would have wished.") It is clear that Cicero in fact has still not decided which course to follow. His staying in Italy is thus more a matter of hesitant passivity than a show of support for Caesar. And yet by offering especially effusive thanks to Cicero (*maiores mihi gratias*), Caesar cleverly characterizes this hesitation as a deliberate decision that is welcome to him, as a *beneficium* that he is happy to accept.<sup>33</sup> He thus slyly tries to ensnare Cicero in a mutual exchange of favors, at the very time when the orator is trying to wriggle free of such obligations. Politeness is cunningly employed here for manipulative political ends. (Further aspects of this awkward exchange between Cicero and Caesar are discussed later in this chapter.)

Not surprisingly, expressions of thanks were an important social obligation in daily face-to-face encounters as well as in letters. At personal meetings, the powerful aristocrat often made a point of acknowledging any help received in the recent past.<sup>34</sup> It was common too for a speaker to seek to relay thanks to a third party not present at a face-to-face meeting.<sup>35</sup> Expressions of thanks and appreciation, then, occurred in a variety of social contexts, both formal and informal, and in both written and oral forms. When they are extended in length, however, or when their inclusion seems especially careful and punctilious, their use implicitly points to the more delicate aspects of aristocratic interaction. In relationships where the smallest tokens of respect and prestige were carefully monitored, it was important to acknowledge properly any services bestowed. Such formalities constituted one means of showing the appropriate sense of *verecundia*. Not to do so could imply that such assistance was taken for granted, an implication with serious ramifications for the perceived social hierarchy.

### *Pledges of support*

Further aspects of the world of aristocratic patronage and political friendship can be seen in Cicero's pledge in his letter to Culleolus (*id et Luceio et Pompeio valde gratum fore teque apud eos praeclare positurum confirmo et spondeo*). Such pledges occur frequently in the correspondence, most commonly using declarative speech-act verbs such as *polliceor*, *confirmo*, *adfirmo* and *spondeo*.<sup>36</sup> As with many of the conventions considered in this chapter, such pledges involve contrasting elements. On the one hand, their assertion of support functions as a strategy of affiliative politeness; the writer earnestly expresses solidarity with the addressee. On the other hand, the explicitness of such assertions again points to a relationship marked by

considerable formality and social distance. This is the language not of trusted close friends, but of powerful men attempting to negotiate working alliances. Such phrases then form part of the formal linguistic register used in aristocratic business and so function as one element in the politeness of respect.

These assurances occur in a range of contexts. They were conventional in letters of recommendation, but they also played a significant role in high-stake political negotiations.<sup>37</sup> In May 43 B.C., for example, we find Munatius Plancus, provincial governor of Transalpine Gaul (except Narbonese Gaul), explicitly pledging his support to Cicero, who by now was leading the senatorial opposition to Mark Antony (*Fam.* 10.11.3; SB 382): *hoc tibi spondeo, mi Cicero, neque animum nec diligentiam mihi defuturam*. ("This I pledge you, my dear Cicero, that neither courage nor care will be lacking on my part.") As Plancus tells Cicero in another letter written about two weeks later, pledges also featured prominently in his negotiations with M. Lepidus, governor of Narbonese Gaul and Nearer Spain (*Fam.* 10.21.1; SB 391): *omnia feci qua re Lepido coniuncto ad rem publicam defendendam minore sollicitudine vestra perditis resisterem. omnia ei et petenti recepi et ultro pollicitus sum*. ("I did everything I could to combine with Lepidus for the defense of the commonwealth, so that I could oppose the desperados and cause you in Rome less anxiety. I gave guarantees for all he requested and made other promises voluntarily.") Lepidus too, it seems, played the same game, sending Plancus personally-written guarantees (*Fam.* 10.21.1; SB 391): *credidi chirographis eius, adfirmationi praesentis Laterensis, qui tum apud me erat reconciliaremque me Lepido fidemque haberem orabat*. ("I relied on letters in his handwriting and on the assurances given in person by Laterensis, who was with me at the time and begging me to make up my quarrel with Lepidus and to trust him.")

The atmosphere here is clearly one of mutual suspicion, and in fact Plancus goes on to conclude that Lepidus cannot be trusted: *non licuit diutius bene de eo sperare* ("It is now no longer possible to expect any good of him.")<sup>38</sup> But while on occasions such pledges could be lightly offered and cynically exploited, in general they generated an ethical leverage between the parties involved, as Plancus' invocation of them to explain his own actions attests. Indeed, the later suicide of Laterensis in protest and shame at Lepidus' eventual treachery provides a spectacular rebuttal of the notion that all Roman politicians were fundamentally hypocritical and impervious to the ethical implications of this sort of promise.<sup>39</sup>

Cicero in fact claims that one of a friend's important duties is to pledge support to an acquaintance in need. Indeed, on occasions he classifies letters that perform this task as a separate epistolary subgenre. As he remarks to Trebianus, who was in exile in 46 B.C. following Caesar's victory in the civil war (*Fam.* 6.10B.1; SB 222): *tali enim tempore aut consolari amicorum est aut*

*polliceri*. ("In circumstances like these it is the duty of friends either to offer comfort or to make promises.")<sup>40</sup> It is an obligation that Cicero undertakes with various other exiles during this period as well.<sup>41</sup>

These epistolary pledges perform a task that would in other circumstances normally be undertaken in a face-to-face context. Cicero's account of an awkward encounter between Pompey and Publius Clodius in 59 B.C. gives us some idea of how such exchanges might unfold (*Att.* 2.22.2; SB 42):

*...fidem recepissee sibi et ipsum et Appium de me. hanc si ille non servaret, ita laturum ut omnes intellexerent nihil sibi antiquius amicitia nostra fuisse. haec et in eam sententiam cum multa dixisset, aiebat illum primo sane diu multa contra, ad extremum autem manus dedisse et adfirmasse nihil se contra eius voluntatem esse facturum. sed postea tamen ille non destitit de nobis asperrime loqui.*

[Pompey reported that]...both Clodius himself and Appius had given him their word with regard to me. If Clodius did not honor his pledge, he, Pompey, would react in such a way that everyone would recognize that nothing was more important to him than our friendship. When he had said this, and much more along the same lines, Clodius at first reportedly objected for quite some time. In the end, however, he capitulated and gave an assurance that he would take no step contrary to Pompey's wishes. But since that conversation he has continued none the less to use most offensive language about me.

Here we see Pompey trying to negotiate some kind of truce in the hostilities between Cicero and Clodius, and he seeks pledges from the latter in an attempt to formalize the desired situation. Although Clodius seems not to have kept his promises, the incident provides a valuable example of the way in which alliances and pacts could be brokered in personal meetings. A rather different but no less fascinating example is furnished by the pledge made by the younger Quintus to his uncle Cicero and M. Brutus in July 44 B.C. Since the battle of Pharsalia, Quintus had been a strong supporter of Caesar, and, as we have seen, had adopted a hostile, sharply critical stance toward his uncle.<sup>42</sup> In the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, however, he evidently moderated his position and decided to align himself more closely with Cicero and Brutus. As Cicero writes to Atticus (*Att.* 16.5.2; SB 410): *hoc cum mihi non modo confirmasset sed etiam persuasisset, egit mecum accurate multis verbis tibi ut sponderem se dignum et te et nobis futurum*. ("After he had not only promised but persuaded me of this, he requested me, deliberately and at some length, to stand guarantor with you that he will in future

be a credit to us both.”) Quintus here gives earnest (and ultimately convincing) assurances to Cicero. He then asks his uncle to lend support to his pledges to Brutus. Although Brutus politely eschews Cicero’s offer to stand as formal guarantor for the young man, he formalizes the agreement with a kiss and embrace (*Att.* 16.5.2; SB 410):

*duxi enim mecum adolescentem ad Brutum. sic ei probatum est quod ad te scribo ut ipse crediderit, me sponsorem accipere noluerit eumque laudans amicissime mentionem tui fecerit, complexus osculatusque dimiserit.*

I took the young man with me to Brutus. He so fully accepted what I have just told you that he took Quintus at his word and declined to take me on as guarantor. As he commended him, he referred to you in the most friendly terms, and dismissed him with an embrace and a kiss.

These two examples feature particularly strained relationships in which doubts prevailed regarding the reliability of one party’s support for the other. But such pledges of support were offered face-to-face quite regularly in less contentious contexts as well. In late 59 B.C., as Clodius’ threats persisted, Cicero took particular comfort from the offers of support provided by those around him, offers presumably made during personal interviews in various contexts.<sup>43</sup> Cicero’s much publicized reconciliation with M. Crassus in 55 B.C. was also effected initially in a face-to-face setting. But, as we shall see later in this chapter, it was further consolidated by an especially formal epistolary pledge (*Fam.* 5.8; SB 25) written after Crassus had left Rome for Parthia.

### *Emphatic assertions of pleasure*

A striking feature of Cicero’s more formal correspondence is its frequent use of phrases that express pleasure in the activities and achievements of the addressee. These are often combined with intensifying adverbs and superlative adjectives to create an emphatic and fulsome manner. In his letter to Culeolus, for example, Cicero deploys the phrase *maxima voluptate adfici* and incorporates various forms of forceful expression: *homini gratissimo; gratias singularis; iucundissimum esse; vehementer peto; valde gratum; pergrata; praeclare positum*. Taking pleasure in another’s successes is of course exactly what good friends do. It is no surprise then to find the verbs *gaudeo* and *laetor*, as well as the nouns *voluptas* and *laetitia*, employed regularly in Cicero’s letters to Atticus.<sup>44</sup> These same expressions, however, occur so

frequently in letters to other less intimate associates that they appear to function as a conventionalized strategy of affiliative politeness.<sup>45</sup> Their use also in letters written by several of Cicero's correspondents confirms this suspicion.<sup>46</sup> The language of true intimates comes to be applied to rather more formal contexts.

The energetic use of intensifying expressions is similarly widespread in the correspondence. Among the most common are: *singularis*, *incredibilis*, *valde*, *vehementer*, *mehercule*, *mirifice*, *mirabiliter*, and *mirificus*.<sup>47</sup> When combined with assertions of pleasure and joy, they make a significant contribution to the distinctive stylistic tendency toward urbane overstatement that is so typical of Cicero's correspondence. This overstatement adds an ostensible energy and warmth to a letter's manner and constitutes one important means through which the writer can convey concern and affection for the correspondent. They contribute to the common polite fiction that the writer and addressee are very dear to each other. As we shall see later in this chapter, however, the conventionalized nature of such remarks ensures that they are interpreted as part of a stylized assertion of emotional warmth, not as a presumptuous claim to intimacy.

### Requests

The central purpose of Cicero's letter to Culleolus is to request a favor. As the studies of Risselada and Deniaux have noted, various formulaic phrases were regularly employed by Cicero and his acquaintances when undertaking this socially delicate task.<sup>48</sup> The speech-act verbs most favored are *peto* and *rogo*, and these are often strengthened by a range of adverbial phrases.<sup>49</sup> In this letter to Culleolus *vehementer* is combined with *etiam atque etiam*, although elsewhere the phrase *in maiorem modum* is often used.<sup>50</sup> These phrases add an element of urgency and insistence to the request in a conventionalized and therefore (usually) acceptable manner.

Judging the appropriate degree of assertiveness to employ is one of the main challenges involved in framing a request. This is again a matter of social discernment, and, as modern studies have suggested, the decision is usually determined by various social factors such as the power-relationship of those involved, the nature of the request itself, and the context in which it is delivered.<sup>51</sup> Cicero's sensitivity to these concerns emerges at various places in his correspondence. While he was provincial governor in Cilicia, for example, he urged Atticus on several occasions to do all he could to make sure his tenure was not prolonged into the following year.<sup>52</sup> In one case, he goes beyond the basic form of request (*te rogo...ut*) to list more precisely the assistance that he desires (*Att.* 5.18.3; SB 111): *amicos consules habemus, nostrum tribunum*

*pl. Furnium. verum tua est opus adsiduitate, prudentia, gratia. tempus est necessarium.* ("We have friendly Consuls and a Tribune, Furnius, on our side. But your constant attention, knowledge and influence are required. This is a real time of need.") At this point, however, Cicero seems to recognize that he is on the verge of appearing too insistent and pushy (*Att.* 5.18.3): *sed turpe est me pluribus verbis agere tecum.* ("But it would be indecent for me to urge you at greater length.") To press his request too forcefully would imply a lack of trust in Atticus' commitment to him as a friend. Moreover Cicero must acknowledge Atticus' right of refusal. He has made his wishes known, but he must also leave some room for Atticus to decline.

These concerns can be seen in Cicero's irritation at a request made by his protégé Trebatius Testa in February 49 B.C. (*Att.* 7.17.3; SB 141): *Trebatius quidem scribit se ab illo VIII Kal. Febr. rogatum esse ut scriberet ad me ut essem ad urbem; nihil ei me gratius facere posse. haec verbis plurimis.* ("Trebatius in fact writes that on 22 January Caesar asked him to write urging me to stay near Rome. He says I could do nothing that would please Caesar more. Develops the subject at great length.") The formality of Trebatius' language in framing the request is suggested by Cicero's paraphrase of the conventionalized expression *te nihil mihi gratius facere potes*.<sup>53</sup> It is clear, however, that Trebatius did not confine himself to this one stereotyped phrase. As Cicero's comment *haec verbis plurimis* sardonically observes, Trebatius tried to bring greater pressure to bear by developing the request at some length. No doubt these further remarks were in themselves politely expressed; but they seem to have created an insistence that chafes the orator. Successful facework depends not just on the appropriateness of individual expressions; their combination as a whole also needs to conform to the constraints of decorum.<sup>54</sup>

The difficulties involved in requesting favors are neatly illustrated in another letter to Atticus written a month or so later. In this case we learn that Caesar himself has asked Cicero to stay in Rome and make his services available (*Att.* 9.6.6; SB 172): *quid autem me [Caesar] roget, paucis ille quidem verbis sed ἐν δυνάμει, cognosce ex ipsius epistula.* ("As for what Caesar asks of me, learn from his own letter—a brief one indeed, but written from a position of power.") Cicero here acknowledges with some surprise the letter's brevity (*paucis quidem verbis*). Caesar has not pleaded at length with him, and so to this extent has avoided the fault criticized in Trebatius' letter. And yet Cicero is not content. As the phrase ἐν δυνάμει indicates, so far as Cicero is concerned, Caesar's few words have the character of an authoritarian command rather than a request between friends.

Fortunately the preservation of Caesar's letter in our extant collection allows us to probe more deeply the source of Cicero's disgruntlement. The general's request is certainly brief (*Att.* 9.6A; SB 172A): *in primis a te peto,*



*quoniam confido me celeriter ad urbem venturum, ut te ibi videam, ut tuo consilio, gratia, dignitate, ope omnium rerum uti possim.* ("In particular I ask of you, since I have every hope of getting to Rome in the near future, to let me see you there, so that I may be able to avail myself of your advice, influence, standing, and help in all matters.") And yet he explicitly asks Cicero to forgive the curtness of his letter (*Att.* 9.6A): *festinationi meae brevitatque litterarum ignosces.* ("You must pardon my haste and the brevity of this letter.") Indeed, at the start of the letter he makes a point of offering thanks to the orator in (what seems to be) a gracious enough fashion (*Att.* 9.6A): *praeterire tamen non potui quin et scriberem ad te et illum mitterem gratiasque agerem, etsi hoc et feci saepe et saepius mihi facturus videor; ita de me mereris.* ("Yet I could not neglect to write to you and to send Furnius and to express my thanks; though *that* I have often done and expect to do even oftener—you give me so much cause.") But in fact it was these thanks (and their further elaboration in person by Furnius) that Cicero, as we saw earlier in this discussion, found unwelcome (*maiores mihi gratias*, *Att.* 9.6.6; SB 172).

One wonders in fact whether *any* form of civility could have satisfied Cicero in these circumstances. Caesar has tried to write to him as a friend and peer, but no degree of courtesy can conceal the brute reality of the general's position. His ruthless use of force in invading Italy inevitably renders these polite civilities hollow and manipulative. The traditional relations of power that in the past were articulated partly through this very linguistic politeness have now been overturned.<sup>55</sup>

Chapter 3 considers further the problems encountered by Roman aristocrats when making requests. For the moment, however, this examination of Cicero's letter to Culleolus has identified several important conventionalized elements of epistolary politeness. In this brief and rather perfunctory letter, Cicero dutifully conveys his thanks for favors received, reinforces his relationship with Culleolus through conventionalized expressions of joy, offers explicit pledges of support, and frames a courteous request. This polite formality, however, was not a peculiarly Ciceronian phenomenon. As our next letter confirms, it formed part of a shared aristocratic idiom.

### Letter 3: M. Marcellus to Cicero (*Fam.* 4.11; SB 232)

In September 46 B.C., Caesar, now dictator in Rome, agreed to allow M. Claudius Marcellus (cos. 51 B.C.) to return to Rome from Mytilene, where he had been living as an exile since the conclusion of the civil war.<sup>56</sup> Cicero, who had worked hard for the restoration of a number of Pompeian exiles, evidently wrote a letter of congratulations to Marcellus.<sup>57</sup> Marcellus in turn

replied with a note of thanks for Cicero's help on his behalf (*Fam.* 4.11; SB 232):

*plurimum valuisse apud me tuam semper auctoritatem cum in omni re tum in hoc maxime negotio potes existimare. cum mihi C. Marcellus, frater amantissimus mei, non solum consilium daret sed precibus quoque me obsecraret, non prius mihi persuadere potuit quam tuis est effectum litteris ut uterer vestro potissimum consilio. res quem ad modum sit acta vestrae litterae mihi declarant. gratulatio tua etsi mihi probatissima quod ab optimo fit animo, tamen hoc mihi multo iucundius est et gratius quod in summa paucitate amicorum, propinquorum ac necessariorum qui vere meae saluti faverent te cupidissimum mei singularemque mihi benevolentiam praestitisse cognovi. reliqua sunt eius modi quibus ego, quoniam haec erant tempora, facile et aequo animo carebam. hoc vero eius modi esse statuo ut sine talium virorum et amicorum benevolentia neque in adversa neque in secunda fortuna quisquam vivere possit. itaque in hoc ego mihi gratulor. tu vero ut intellegas homini amicissimo te tribuisse officium re tibi praestabo.*

That your advice has always had the greatest influence with me, you can judge both from all previous experience, and particularly in this present matter. Although my cousin C. Marcellus, who has the greatest affection for me, not only advised, but begged and implored me, he could not persuade me until your letter convinced me to follow your joint judgement rather than any other. The letters I have had from you both tell me how the affair went through. Your congratulations are most agreeable to me because of the friendly spirit in which they are offered; but far more pleasing and welcome to me is the fact that when so very few of my friends and relatives and connections sincerely wished for my restoration, I know that you have the greatest affection for me and have shown me extraordinary goodwill. Everything else, given their present state and the times, I was quite well content to do without. But *this* is another matter; without the goodwill of such men and such friends as you, nobody, in my judgement, can truly live, whether in good fortune or bad. So in this respect I congratulate myself; and I shall give you tangible proof to convince you that you have rendered your service to a man who is your very sincere friend.

This letter, written by a member of one of Rome's most prestigious families, employs several of the conventionalized epistolary features that we have

already identified. Particularly striking is its tone of earnest overstatement conveyed through the accumulation of superlative adjectives and other emphatic expressions. There are some twelve examples in these few lines: *plurimum, semper, maxime, potissimum, omni, optimo, summa, singularem, amantissimus, probatissima, cupidissimum, amicissimo*.<sup>58</sup> Marcellus also employs the semiformulaic *multo iucundius est et gratius* and concludes with a pledge of future support (*re tibi praestabo*).<sup>59</sup> Two further conventions, however, warrant detailed discussion.

### *Assertions of goodwill*

Marcellus graciously observes that Cicero's exceptional *benevolentia* toward him has been made abundantly clear (*singularemque mihi benevolentiam praestitisse cognovi*). The choice of noun here is important. As Hellegouarc'h notes, *benevolentia* was a key term in the political vocabulary of Roman friendship.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, direct assertions of goodwill were a typical feature of aristocratic correspondence and constituted an important means of establishing and reinforcing social alliances.<sup>61</sup> In his earliest extant letter to Appius Claudius, for example, Cicero explicitly draws attention to the *benevolentia* he feels for his correspondent (*Fam.* 3.1.1; SB 64): *de mea autem benevolentia erga te, etsi potes ex eodem Phania cognoscere, tamen videntur etiam aliquae meae partes*. ("But as to my goodwill toward you, although you can learn of that too from Phanius, I think that I also have a word to say.") Later, too, in their troubled relationship he acknowledges the need to make this *benevolentia* known to all around them (*Fam.* 3.12.4; SB 75): *benevolentior tibi quam fui nilo sum factus, diligentior ad declarandam benevolentiam multo*. ("I have not become any better disposed to you than I was—but I am much more scrupulous about publicizing this goodwill.")<sup>62</sup>

Such remarks are clearly affiliative in intent, and so, from this perspective, can be classified as a strategy of affiliative politeness. Their frequent use, however, in negotiations between powerful men also endows them with a degree of formality. Such assertions are rarely necessary in relationships founded on real trust. Explicit professions of goodwill in Cicero's letters thus often function as an *inverse* indicator of the intimacy that existed between correspondents. They frequently suggest that there is in fact some reason to suspect the absence of a warm rapport (as their repeated appearances in his letters to Appius Claudius attest). These expressions then are usually stylized and used in contexts characterized by a considerable degree of social distance. Courteous aristocrats such as Cicero and Marcellus take care to declare their goodwill in a conventionalized and appropriate manner; in doing so, they again demonstrate their *verecundia*.<sup>63</sup>

The need for such explicitness seems to derive from the shifting and uncertain nature of political alliances in Rome. As we have noted, the associations on which senators embarked were opportunistic and malleable, frequently based on temporary convenience rather than shared commitment to specific ideals. In such circumstances, unambiguous affirmations of goodwill were highly valued. In particular, they could forestall the insidious effect of gossip and rumor, and thus furnished one means of overcoming the mistrust and suspicion inherent in many aristocratic dealings.

### *Offering congratulations*

As we have noted, Cicero evidently sent Marcellus a note of congratulation on the news of his recall from exile. Such letters were a standard feature of aristocratic etiquette. Thus we find Cicero also writing to Marcellus' cousin, Gaius Claudius Marcellus, to congratulate him on his election to the consulship of 50 B.C. (*Fam.* 15.7; SB 99), and sending similar letters on the same occasion to the man's father (*Fam.* 15.8; SB 100) and to Marcus Claudius as well (*Fam.* 15.9; SB 101). He also celebrates M. Caelius' election to the aedileship (*Fam.* 2.9.1; SB 85), and the younger Scribonius Curio's to the tribunate (*Fam.* 2.7.1; SB 107). Formal events in the social sphere such as marriage engagements could likewise prompt congratulations from friends.<sup>64</sup>

We should not, however, dismiss such notes as bland and meaningless social ritual. These letters possessed a special significance because of the prominent role played by *invidia* in Roman society, particularly in the competitive world of aristocratic politics. As we saw in the introduction, one man's success could serve to highlight another's failure to achieve a similar level of prestige. To offer hearty congratulations often required a generous and magnanimous spirit. Indeed, Cicero's sensitivity to such matters is evident from a passing remark that he makes to M. Marius following his successful prosecution of T. Munatius Plancus Bursa in 52 B.C. (or possibly 51), one of the few prosecutions that Cicero undertook in his long legal career (*Fam.* 7.2.2; SB 52): *de Bursa te gaudere certo scio, sed nimis verecunde mihi gratularis*. ("As far as Bursa is concerned, I am sure that you are very pleased, but you congratulate me far too diffidently.")<sup>65</sup> Cicero goes on to paraphrase Marius' professed reservation (*Fam.* 7.2.2): *putas enim, ut scribis, propter hominis sordis minus me magnam illam laetitiam putare*. ("For you write that you suppose I judge this pleasure less great because of the man's lowly rank.") The point of disagreement here is a minor one, and Cicero's tone in the letter overall is light and bantering.<sup>66</sup> This relaxed context, however, only emphasizes Cicero's sensitivity to such details. Even a passing comment by

an apolitical friend is not allowed to go unchallenged.<sup>67</sup> Cicero declares his success in the trial a significant triumph and proceeds to make explicit his reasons for thinking so (*Fam.* 7.2.2–3). He then concludes with the exhortation (*Fam.* 7.2.3): *quam ob rem valde iubeo gaudere te. magna res gesta est.* (“For this reason I earnestly bid you to rejoice. A great deed has been accomplished.”) Showing pleasure in another’s successes was an important business within these circles.

Cicero experiences a rather more calculated and serious snub at the hands of Pompey in 62 B.C., following his successful suppression of the Catilinarian conspiracy. To Cicero’s mind this achievement warranted proper acknowledgment and generous congratulations. Pompey, however, was less than forthcoming with his praise. Stationed in Asia and preparing to return to Rome after his own successful campaigns, the general was ostentatiously tight-lipped in his recognition of the orator’s actions.<sup>68</sup> As Cicero tartly observes (*Fam.* 5.7.3; SB 3): *res eas gessi quarum aliquam in tuis litteris et nostrae necessitudinis et rei publicae causa gratulationem exspectavi.* (“My achievements have been such that I expected to find a word of congratulations on them in your letter, both for our friendship’s sake and that of the commonwealth.”) Pompey’s silence denies Cicero the recognition and prestige that he feels he deserves. The importance of congratulations in polite etiquette is again highlighted by their omission.<sup>69</sup>

This incident also demonstrates well the significance of the other strategies of affiliative politeness that we have considered so far. Cicero goes on to construe Pompey’s lack of comment as an indication of his hostile disposition (*Fam.* 5.7.2; SB 3): *[litterae tuae] exiguam significationem tuae erga me voluntatis habebant.* (“[your letter] contained little indication of your friendly disposition toward me.”) In this tense environment, energetic assertions of goodwill, for all their conventionalization and formality, had an important part to play in the facilitation of political relationships.

Nevertheless, Cicero (as often) does not extend his querulous remarks too far. He combines his criticism of Pompey’s conduct with a remark that goes some way to saving the man’s face (*Fam.* 5.7.3): *quam ego abs te praetermissam esse arbitror quod verere ne cuius animum offenderes.* (“I imagine you omitted anything of that sort for fear of giving offense in any quarter.”) Cicero thus manages to signal his dismay at Pompey’s apparent hostility while also demonstrating a wider desire to maintain harmonious relations with him.<sup>70</sup>

The offering of congratulations, then, functions on one level as a strategy of affiliative politeness, as the writer takes pleasure in the addressee’s recent success. Sometimes such remarks may be relatively informal in tone; but

because they often acknowledge events of social and political importance, their performance regularly involves matters of face and *dignitas*. For this reason, their deployment can also operate as a show of respect, as the writer explicitly celebrates the addressee's status and prestige.

### *Polite wit and compliments*

Marcellus' letter to Cicero contains one further feature typical of some of the more sophisticated letters exchanged between Roman aristocrats. With his phrase *itaque in hoc ego mihi gratulor* Marcellus produces a modest yet neat wordplay on his foregoing reference to Cicero's own congratulations (*gratulatio tua*). These congratulations, Marcellus suggests, afford in turn a moment of self-congratulation on having such loyal and devoted friends. The deftness of touch resides not just in its verbal play (*mihi gratulor / gratulatio tua*), but also in its elegant compliment to the orator.

Various examples from the correspondence suggest that such deft compliments were regarded as a desirable part of sophisticated epistolary manners.<sup>71</sup> Decimus Brutus, for example, begins one of his letters to Cicero with the apparently brusque remark (*Fam.* 11.13.1; SB 388): *iam non ago tibi gratias*. ("I no longer give you thanks.") But what seems to be a rejection of customary civilities is quickly transformed into an elegant compliment. Cicero's services, Decimus goes on to claim, are so great that no thanks could ever be sufficient (*Fam.* 11.13.1): *cui enim re vix referre possum, huic verbis non patitur res satis fieri*. ("There is no making adequate return in words to one whom I can scarcely repay in deeds.")<sup>72</sup> Marcus Brutus employs a similarly elegant twist in a letter to the orator in 43 B.C. (*ad Brut.* 1.6.1; SB 12): *noli exspectare dum tibi gratias agam*. ("Don't wait for me to thank you.") Again this opening remark suggests that the writer is not going to perform the expected social niceties. From this unpromising start, however, he neatly contrives a gracious compliment (*ad Brut.* 1.6.1; SB 12): *iam pridem hoc ex nostra necessitudine, quae ad summam benevolentiam pervenit, sublatum esse debet*. ("For some time now the need for this kind of thing ought to have been set aside from our relationship, which has developed into so close a friendship.") Brutus and Cicero are now such trusted friends that they can move beyond the polite rituals typical of more formal relationships.<sup>73</sup>

Cicero's own efforts in this regard are often characterized as much by a punctiliousness of manner as by verbal wit. One typical approach is to acknowledge earnestly any compliments bestowed on him by his correspondent, and then use these as a springboard from which to launch upon his own

polite compliments in return. The opening remarks of a letter to Lentulus Spinther illustrate well this approach (*Fam.* 1.7.1; SB 18):

*legi tuas litteras, quibus ad me scribis gratum tibi esse quod crebro certior per me fias de omnibus rebus et meam erga te benevolentiam facile perspicias; quorum alterum mihi, ut te plurimam diligam, facere necesse est, si volo is esse quem tu me esse voluisti; alterum facio libenter, ut, quoniam intervallo locorum et temporum diiuncti sumus, per litteras tecum quam saepissime colloquar.*

I have read your letter, in which you write to me that you are grateful to be kept informed so frequently through me on all matters and to see such plain evidence of my goodwill toward you. As for the latter, I am obliged of necessity to hold you in the highest regard, if I want to be such as you have wanted to think me. As for the former, since we are separated by distance of place and time, it is a pleasure to talk to you by letter as often as possible.

From Cicero's initial comment we can infer that Lentulus in his recent letter had himself employed two standard conventions of aristocratic politeness: he had explicitly acknowledged Cicero's *benevolentia*, and expressed appreciation for his taking the time to send regular information about affairs in Rome.<sup>74</sup> Cicero, however, does not simply acknowledge Lentulus' courtesies; he urbanely elaborates on them. He declares that his goodwill toward Lentulus springs from a desire to live up to his friend's expectations (*si volo is esse quem tu me esse voluisti*); and he insists on his pleasure at exchanging letters with Lentulus. Such compliments convey an impression of generous magnanimity far removed from the grudging resentment typical of political *invidia*. To this extent they function as a strategy of affiliative politeness.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, their care and precision establishes a degree of formality and respect. Cicero here is clearly on his best behavior.

This studied civility continues throughout the letter. Cicero, for example, responds with great punctiliousness to the congratulations that Lentulus had himself scrupulously offered. In section 7, he remarks (*Fam.* 1.7.7; SB 18): *quod mihi de nostro statu, de Milonis familiaritate, de levitate et imbecillitate Clodi gratularis, minime miramur te tuis, ut egregium artificem, praeclaris operibus laetari*. ("As for your congratulations on the state of my affairs, on Milo's friendship and Clodius' irresponsibility and impotence, it does not surprise me at all to see you delighting, like some fine artist, in his own masterpieces.") Here again Cicero elaborates into a compliment what could have been a quite straightforward "thank you." His own current good fortune, he claims, is

due entirely to Lentulus' skillful politicking. He contrives a similarly polite touch in his acknowledgment of Lentulus' second congratulatory remark (*Fam.* 1.7.11): *quod mihi de filia et de Crassipede gratularis, agnosco humanitatem tuam*. ("As for your congratulations on my daughter's engagement to Crassipes, I appreciate your kind consideration.") Lentulus' courtesy begets further courtesy in return as Cicero deftly praises the man's *humanitas*.

Our final example of this technique plays off a common epistolary convention in which the writer entrusts the protection of his *dignitas* to his correspondent.<sup>76</sup> A straightforward use of this convention appears in a letter to Cicero from Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.21A; SB 392): *meam dignitatem commendatam habeo rogo*. ("Let me ask you to regard my public standing as entrusted to your care.") The conventionalized form of such requests is evident from an exchange between Cicero and Q. Cornificius (*Fam.* 12.17.3; SB 204): *quod mihi existimationem tuam dignitatemque commendas, facis tu quidem omnium more*. ("In commending your reputation and prestige to my care you follow indeed a widespread practice.") It is Decimus Brutus again who takes this familiar trope and contrives from it an elegant compliment (*Fam.* 11.4.1; SB 342): *si de tua in me voluntate dubitarem, multis a te verbis peterem ut dignitatem meam tuerere. sed profecto est ita ut mihi persuasi, me tibi esse curae*. ("If I had any doubt of your disposition toward me, I would ask you at very great length to defend my prestige; but the fact surely is as I am convinced—that you have my interests at heart.") Decimus here deftly implies that his relationship with Cicero is an especially reliable and cooperative one, and that he can therefore dispense with the usual convention. This is urbane enough; but it is typical of Cicero's manner that he takes up the point and in his reply returns the compliment to Decimus in a fulsome and emphatic way (*Fam.* 11.6; SB 343):

*quod mihi tuam dignitatem commendas, eodem tempore existimo te mihi meam dignitatem commendare, quam mehercule non habeo tu cariorum. qua re mihi gratissimum facies si exploratum habebis tuis laudibus nullo loco nec consilium nec studium meum defuturum.*

When you commend your prestige to my care, I feel that you are also commending my own to myself, and this, on my word, is no dearer to me than yours. Therefore you will oblige me very much if you will rest assured that my advice and devotion shall at no point be lacking to promote your glory.

There is an almost agonistic quality to this courtesy as Cicero strives to outdo Decimus in gracious civility.



To return to Marcellus' letter: we can see that, from a general perspective, it is, like Cicero's letter to Culleolus, a rather perfunctory one. Over the years, Marcellus and Cicero would both have composed many such examples, and we should not necessarily assume that they labored long and hard over them. But it is precisely the available repertoire of conventionalized phrases that would have allowed them to administer this kind of business with such facility. Nevertheless, as we have seen, within these formulaic elements there was room for the incorporation of elegant compliments and witty word-plays. Perhaps most striking, however, is Marcellus' use of overstatement to create a tone of earnest engagement virtually identical to that employed by Cicero himself. We are dealing here with a shared idiom of politeness, not a Ciceronian idiosyncrasy.

#### Letter 4: Cicero to Cassius Longinus (*Fam.* 15.14; SB 106)

Our next example of formal correspondence is a letter written by Cicero in 51 B.C. to C. Cassius Longinus, while the latter was proquaestor in Syria (*Fam.* 15.14; SB 106).<sup>77</sup> The letter seems to have been prompted by a written recommendation for M. Fabius that Cassius had sent Cicero a short while earlier.<sup>78</sup> Significantly, however, Cicero does not reply with just a brief note of acknowledgment; he takes the opportunity to compose something considerably longer (some six sections in all). Although the letter includes a brief request in section 5, Cicero's prime aim (as he notes explicitly at the end) is the consolidation of their friendship (*confirmatio amicitiae*). This cultivation of political contacts was as much a part of an aristocrat's daily business as the writing of recommendations. As we shall see, the language and manner adopted when forging these contacts could vary. Nevertheless, the generally formal tone that Cicero employs in this letter to Cassius demonstrates again that such relationships were often characterized by restraint and the desire to show due respect.

Cicero begins with the kind of witty touch that we have just noted in the letter of M. Marcellus (*Fam.* 15.14.1; SB 106): *M. Fabium quod mihi amicum tua commendatione das, nullum in eo facio quaestum*. ("Your recommendation gives me a friend in the person of M. Fabius; but I do not profit from him.") Cicero here momentarily confounds expectations. Instead of graciously accepting Cassius' recommendation, he seems to be rejecting it as being of no tangible benefit to him. But the financial metaphor turns out to be a witty play on Fabius' reputation as a business man, and Cicero continues the jest with his colloquial use of the banking phrase *in aere esse* (*Fam.* 15.14.1): *multi enim anni sunt cum ille in aere meo est et a me diligitur propter*

*summam suam humanitatem et observantiam*. ("For he has been in my debt for many years now and is highly regarded by me for his good nature and attentive courtesy.")<sup>79</sup> It is a light touch that neatly reinforces the mutual associations between the three men.<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless Cicero takes care to ensure that his bantering remarks are not misinterpreted. He goes on to assure Cassius that his recommendation has indeed made some difference (*Fam.* 15.14.1): *sed tamen, quod <te> ab eo egregie diligere sensi, multo amicitior ei sum factus*. ("However, I have become much the more his friend for having perceived what an exceptional regard he has for you.") Cicero prefers to err on the side of cautious civility. Indeed, it is typical of his concerted yet rather formal courtesy that he proceeds to embellish the point further (*Fam.* 15.14.1–2): *itaque, quamquam profecerunt litterae tuae, tamen aliquanto plus commendationis apud me habuit animus ipsius erga te mihi perspectus et cognitus. sed de Fabio faciemus studiose quae rogas*. ("So, although your letter was helpful, his own disposition toward you, now that I am thoroughly aware of it, is, in my eyes, a considerably greater recommendation. Anyhow, as to Fabius, I shall spare no effort to comply with your request.") Cicero thus contrives to extend a simple acknowledgment to a full paragraph. In doing so he conveys in symbolic form his desire to engage with Cassius (a form of affiliative politeness); but the care with which these sentiments are presented demonstrates too a degree of restraint and formality.

This elaboration of courtesies continues in the next section, as Cicero now turns his attention to Cassius and explains why he, too, had hoped they could meet in person rather than communicate via letter. These remarks evidently take their cue from a comment in Cassius' letter, one probably intended as a polite pleasantry rather than something to be discussed at length. But Cicero once again takes the topic and develops it in some detail, producing friendly expressions of appreciation that run to several paragraphs. To do so, he leans on his extensive rhetorical training, both in *inventio*, as he generates material from this rather unpromising subject, and in organization. Just as a good methodical orator should, he outlines his upcoming points clearly and explicitly (note *primus, deinde, tum, and postremo*) (*Fam.* 15.14.2):

*tu multis de causis vellem me convenire potuisses: primum ut te, quem iam diu plurimi facio, tanto intervallo viderem; deinde ut tibi, quod feci per litteras, possem praesens gratulari; tum ut quibus de rebus vellemus, tu tuis, ego meis, inter nos communicaremus; postremo ut amicitia nostra, quae summis officiis ab utroque culta est sed longis intervallis temporum interruptam consuetudinem habuit, confirmaretur vehementius.*

For many reasons I would have liked you to have been able to meet me. First, since I have long had a high regard for you, I would have liked to see you after so considerable an interval. Second, I would have liked to congratulate you in person as I did by letter. Third, I would have liked to exchange views on such of our several concerns as either of us cared to raise. Lastly, I would have liked to see a further strengthening of our friendship, which has been fostered on both sides by substantial services, but interrupted, as to daily contact, by lengthy periods of separation.

We may note here Cicero's explicit expression of esteem for Cassius using the phrase *te quem iam diu plurimi facio*. Such expressions are relatively frequent in the correspondence and function much like the professions of *benevolentia* discussed earlier. Instead of proclaiming his goodwill toward the recipient, the Roman aristocrat often declares how highly he regards him.<sup>81</sup> Such explicit assertions again seem unnecessary in truly intimate relationships. Although Cicero's expressed wish to engage in face-to-face conversations with Cassius suggests a certain intimacy, his reference to strengthening their *amicitia* points in fact to a considerable social distance between them. Indeed, he acknowledges that their association has been punctuated by long periods of separation (*longis intervallis temporum interruptam consuetudinem*). His explicit assertion of esteem thus appears to be another conventionalized strategy typical of aristocratic political courtship. It functions as affiliative politeness within a generally formal context.

Cicero goes on to consider in further detail the four points that his epistolary *divisio* has just identified. The first aspect is dealt with quite briefly (*Fam.* 15.14.3): *unus scilicet fructus qui in te videndo est percipi litteris non potest*. ("Of course the satisfaction of seeing you cannot be enjoyed by letter.") Nothing, Cicero suggests, can truly make up for not seeing Cassius in person—an elegantly underplayed compliment. He develops this idea further as he turns to address the topic of congratulating Cassius for his military achievements in Syria (*Fam.* 15.14.3):

*alter gratulationis est is quidem exilior quam si tibi te ipsum intuens gratularer, sed tamen et feci antea et facio nunc tibi cum pro rerum magnitudine quas gessisti, tum pro opportunitate temporis gratulor, quod te de provincia decedentem summa laus et summa gratia provinciae prosecuta est.*

The second pleasure of congratulating you is indeed a little less substantial than if I were looking you in the eye as I did it. However, I

have done so once, and I do so again. Yes, I congratulate you, both on the magnitude of your success and on its timeliness, for you are leaving for Rome with the thanks and plaudits of your province following close behind you.

We see here again the importance attached to offering generous congratulations to one's associates, and Cicero's refinement derives in part from the fact that he lets no opportunity for magnanimous celebration pass him by. He congratulates Cassius for a second time, and throws in for good measure tributes to his friend's achievements and the reputation he has gained.

He divides his third point into two parts: a discussion of Cassius' pressing political business, and a discussion of his own. As we shall see in chapter 3, on occasions it could smack of presumption to offer advice to a fellow senator. Here, however, Cicero seems comfortable enough giving his opinion regarding Cassius' best plan of action (*Fam.* 15.14.4): *ego ceterarum rerum causa tibi Romam properandum magno opere censeo; nam et ea quae reliqui tranquilla de te erant et hac tua recenti victoria tanta clarum tuum adventum fore intellego*. ("On all grounds but one I strongly advise you to make haste back to Rome. When I left, all was quiet so far as you were concerned, and I appreciate that your recent brilliant victory will make your arrival distinguished.") These remarks convey Cicero's goodwill and general desire to see Cassius prosper. Nevertheless, he punctiliously adds a deferential disclaimer (*Fam.* 15.14.4): *huius rei totum consilium tuum est; tu enim scis quid sustinere possis*. ("The matter is entirely for you to judge. You know your own strength.")

At this point, Cicero turns attention to his own affairs and makes a formal request (*Fam.* 15.14.5): *de me autem idem tecum his ago litteris quod superioribus egi, ut omnis tuos nervos in eo contendas ne quid mihi ad hanc provinciam, quam et senatus et populus annuam esse voluit, temporis pro-rogetur*. ("As for me, my plea in this letter is the same as in my last. Strain every nerve to prevent any prolongation of my present office, which both Senate and People fixed for one year.") As we have seen, this is a request he makes of numerous individuals during this year, and he acknowledges that he has already mentioned the subject in an earlier letter to Cassius. We saw in the case of Atticus that he pressed the request with some insistence, and he does the same here with Cassius (*Fam.* 15.14.5): *habes Paullum nostrum nostri cupidissimum; est Curio, est Furnius*. ("You can look to our friend Paullus, who is a very eager supporter of mine. There is Curio, there is Furnius.") At this point, however, he stops and rounds off the subject with a request using the polite subjunctive: *sic velim enitare quasi in eo sint mihi omnia*. ("I would like you to try your hardest, in the belief that it means everything to me.")

The letter concludes with a formal assertion of their friendship (*Fam.* 15.14.6): *extremum illud est de iis quae proposueram, confirmatio nostrae amicitiae*. ("The last of the points I have mentioned was the strengthening of our friendship.") The form that this *confirmatio* takes is highly conventionalized. Cicero begins by drawing attention to the long-standing nature of their relationship and its origins (*Fam.* 15.14.6): *tu puer me appetisti, ego autem semper ornamento te mihi fore duxi*. ("As a boy you sought me out, and on my side I always believed that you would be a source of pride to me.") He then acknowledges some of Cassius' most important *beneficia* to him: *fuisti etiam praesidio tristissimis meis temporibus*. ("You also defended me in my darkest days.") And he goes on to mention their mutual acquaintance, M. Brutus, whose association with both of them serves as another bond in their relationship: *accessit post tuum discessum familiaritas mihi cum Bruto tuo maxima*. ("After you went abroad I formed a very close friendship with your connection Brutus.") This brief survey is rounded off with a direct declaration: *itaque in vestro ingenio et industria mihi plurimum et suavitatis et dignitatis constitutum puto*. ("In your joint talents and energy I think I have a rich prospect of pleasure and prestige.") This kind of explicit enumeration of the various ties between writer and addressee is a distinctive feature of aristocratic correspondence, and one that warrants closer examination.

### *The commemoration of family ties and mutual services*

The conventionalized nature of such remarks is clear from a comment in a letter written to Cicero (probably in March 44 B.C.) by Pompeius Bithynicus (*Fam.* 6.16; SB 323):<sup>82</sup>

*si mihi tecum non et multae et iustae causae amicitiae privatim essent, repeterem initia amicitiae ex parentibus nostris, quod faciendum iis existimo qui paternam amicitiam nullis ipsi officiis prosecuti sunt. itaque contentus ero nostra ipsorum amicitia, cuius fiducia peto a te ut absentem me, quibuscumque in rebus opus fuerit, tueare, si nullum officium tuum apud me intermoriturum existimas.*

If my friendship with you did not rest on many good grounds peculiar to ourselves, I would go back to the origins of the friendship deriving from our parents. But I think that kind of thing has to be undertaken by those who have not followed up a family friendship with their own good services. Therefore I shall be content with our personal friendship, and relying on this I ask you to defend my interests during my

absence, wherever the need may arise, provided you believe that no service of yours will ever fade in my memory.

Bithynicus here draws attention to the fact that he is *not* going to relate in detail the origins of their friendship and invoke ties that go back to their parents. From this, we can infer that to relate such details was in fact regular practice in formal aristocratic correspondence. Bithynicus, however, urbanely eschews this element of etiquette in order to convey the special degree of trust that he enjoys with Cicero. Their relationship (he claims) has been consolidated in a more meaningful fashion by their exchange of mutual services. Long-standing family ties are a help, but they are best reinforced by the active giving and receiving of favors. Indeed, this is the ideal that Cicero tries to depict in his letter to Cassius. Although he cannot (it seems) invoke actual family connections, he can at least trace their association back to Cassius' boyhood (*tu puer me adpetisti*). He then claims that this early association was consolidated in the following years by the help and support provided by Cassius, and by mutual friends such as Brutus.

The conventionalized nature of these remarks is further confirmed by a letter written by Cicero in 46 B.C. to Munatius Plancus, who was at this time in Africa with Caesar (*Fam.* 13.29; SB 282). Cicero sets out to ask Plancus for help in a rather delicate matter involving Caesar and the estate left to C. Ateius Capito in the will of a certain T. Antistius.<sup>83</sup> Cicero begins by mentioning his ties with Plancus' father (*in iis necessariis qui tibi a patre relictisint*), and goes on to claim that this association was developed by his own affection for the young Plancus (*ab his initiis noster in te amor profectus auxit paternam necessitudinem*). He then states that these contacts have been cultivated diligently by Plancus himself (*me a te in primis coeptum esse observari, coli, diligere*), and that a mutual interest in the literary arts (*eorum studiorum earumque artium*) has consolidated their association.

As far as we can tell, these claims have some basis in reality. A fragment of Suetonius asserts that Plancus received oratorical instruction from Cicero, although what form this took is not clear.<sup>84</sup> It may be significant, though, that Cicero does not refer to any recent dealings between them. He extends the routine to some length, but is rather vague about their association in the past few years.<sup>85</sup> We may suspect then that the relationship between the two men has grown rather distant in recent times. Cicero is thus obliged to fall back on the procedure disparaged by Pompeius Bithynicus: the invocation of long-standing family ties without any mention of recent *officia*.

Naturally the use of this kind of routine becomes yet more problematic when family connections and mutual services are in even shorter supply. This is the problem that faces Cicero in his correspondence of 51–50 B.C. with

Appius Claudius Pulcher, the brother of his now deceased political enemy Publius Clodius, as they attempt to manufacture some kind of working relationship.<sup>86</sup> In this case, Cicero must rely on the more recent services between them to try to engender a spirit of trust and cooperation. Thus he begins one of his letters to Appius with the following routine (*Fam.* 3.4.1–2; SB 67):

*meum studium erga te et officium, tametsi multis iam rebus spero tibi esse cognitum, tamen in iis maxime declarabo quibus plurimum significare potuero tuam mihi existimationem et dignitatem carissimam esse. mihi et Q. Fabius Vergilianus et C. Flaccus L. f. et diligentissime M. Octavius Cn. f. demonstravit me a te plurimi fieri. quod egomet multis argumentis iam antea iudicaram maximeque illo libro augurali, quem ad me amantissime scriptum suavissimum misisti. mea in te omnia summa necessitudinis officia constabunt.*

While I hope my devotion and sense of obligation toward you are already known from many of my deeds, nevertheless, in those matters where I shall be able to demonstrate it best, I shall make clear most of all that your reputation and prestige are very dear to me. Your warm regard for me has been made plain to me by Q. Fabius Vergilianus, by C. Flaccus, son of Lucius, and especially by M. Octavius, son of Gnaeus. I had previously deduced it from many indications, above all the charming gift of your volume on Augury with its affectionate dedication to me. All that I can do for you to the uttermost limits of friendly service will be done.

Cicero invokes here both the *officia* that he has recently performed on Appius' behalf (*meum studium in te et officium*), and those that he will perform in the future (*mea in te omnia summa necessitudinis officia constabunt*). In doing so he incorporates two of the epistolary conventions already discussed: an assurance that he will uphold Appius' *dignitas* and *existimatio* (see appendix, no. 7); and (through the verb *constabunt*) a pledge of future assistance (see appendix, no. 2). He then goes on to acknowledge Appius' corresponding *officia* on his behalf. Appius' agents (Cicero claims) have made his high regard for Cicero quite clear (*me a te plurimi fieri*), and his recent dedication to Cicero of a book on augury has provided further proof of this esteem. Ideally, as we have seen, these professions would be combined with an acknowledgment of their long-standing friendship. In this case, however, such a claim is rather difficult, and the best that Cicero can manage is to refer to relations since their recent reconciliation (*Fam.* 3.4.2; SB 67): *nam cum te ipsum, ex quo tempore tu me diligere coepisti, cottidie pluris feci.* ("For

my regard for you has increased from day to day ever since you began to hold me in esteem.”) We see here conventionalized assertions of esteem similar to those that he employs in his letter to Cassius (see appendix, nos. 8c and d).

It is likely, too, that Cicero engaged in a similar routine in his next letter to Appius, written in Corcyra around 12 June but no longer extant.<sup>87</sup> Appius evidently referred in his reply to a *commemoratio officiorum* (“commemoration of obligations performed”) that mentioned events from some way back in the past (*ex alto repetita sint*, *Fam.* 3.5.1; SB 68). As we have seen, Cicero in *Fam.* 3.4 limits his comments to recent services. Presumably, then, in the lost letter he essayed a rather more extended version of this routine and tried to invoke certain friendly services between them from an earlier period. It is unfortunate we cannot see at first hand how he attempted to go about this task.<sup>88</sup>

Appius’ reaction to this formal routine is also instructive. He urbanely assures Cicero that, so far as he is concerned, this kind of explicit acknowledgment of mutual services is quite unnecessary (*supervacanea est*, *Fam.* 3.5.1; SB 68). In doing so, he conveys a willingness to move their relationship onto a more familiar footing. Indeed, he seems to have made several optimistic remarks about the solid and trustworthy nature of their relationship (these can be inferred from Cicero’s comment *re vera confirmata amicitia et perspecta fide*). Appius is clearly playing his part in trying to cultivate their working association. Cicero, however, does not rush into a tone of easy familiarity. He insists on extending formal thanks to Appius in a careful and deferential manner.<sup>89</sup> As we shall see in chapter 4, there was good reason to retain a measure of cautious restraint and respect in his dealings with the man.

These examples help us to place Cicero’s final remarks to Cassius in their proper context. He is undertaking here a conventionalized affiliative routine that is relatively frequent in aristocratic correspondence.<sup>90</sup> Although the use of individual conventionalized epistolary phrases such as “Dear Sir,” “Sincerely yours” and “I would be grateful” is familiar to most Anglo-American readers, the deployment of more extended polite routines is probably rather less familiar.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, the “commemoration of family ties and mutual services” seems a distinctively Roman phenomenon, one that tells us a good deal about aristocratic interaction. In the first place, it confirms that epistolary exchanges were often constrained by a high degree of formality. Negotiations between powerful men were regularly undertaken in a semi-ritualized manner, following a conventionalized framework. As we have seen, remarks were tailored to individual circumstance; but the general format was mutually understood to the extent that individuals such as Pompeius Bithynicus could explicitly deviate from it for urbane effect. Second, the prevalence of



such routines reflects again the peculiar demands of Roman political life. Alliances frequently had to be cultivated with difficult and arrogant grantees. This kind of polite routine provided a convenient structure for such awkward negotiations. Its formality ensured that the recipient was shown the appropriate respect, and its content conveyed the desired affiliative intent.

Cicero's letter to Cassius also gives a more general insight into his approach to cultivating *amicitiae*. As we have seen, his relationship with Cassius at this point was not especially close. Nevertheless, he energetically exploits the occasion of their recent correspondence regarding Fabius in order to develop their association. There is no pressing business at hand; yet, here as elsewhere, by deploying his ability to develop a thought or conceit to its fullest, Cicero manufactures a lengthy display of elegant politeness from quite unpromising material. Much of it is formal in tone, although his gentle wit at the start adds an attractive personal touch. Indeed, this careful *confirmatio amicitiae* seems to have borne fruit in the following years. Their extant correspondence from 45 B.C., with its teasing references to Epicurean philosophy, suggest that the two men enjoyed relaxed and erudite conversations on the subject.<sup>92</sup> For all their formality and predictable language, such strategies of politeness were vital in creating the potential for cooperation—and perhaps even friendship.

### Letter 5: Cicero to C. Matius (*Fam.* 11.27; SB 348)

Cicero's only extant letter to Gaius Matius (*Fam.* 11.27; SB 348), written some six months after Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C., shows that these routines of politeness could in fact be deployed for a variety of purposes. Matius, a man of equestrian rank, had gained considerable influence at the highest levels through his close association with Caesar, and in general Cicero's relations with him seem to have been amicable and respectful.<sup>93</sup> Tensions arose between the pair, however, following Matius' support of Octavian's games in honor of the dead dictator in July 44, and his vote (allegedly) in favor of a recent law.<sup>94</sup> Cicero appears to have complained to friends about these actions, and his complaints eventually came to the attention of Matius himself. Matius was evidently aggrieved and made his displeasure known to one of their mutual friends, Trebatius Testa. Testa in turn passed the news of Matius' annoyance on to Cicero.<sup>95</sup>

Scholarly attention has generally focused on the final two sections of the letter (7–8), which address the ethical issues raised by Caesar's position as dictator and his assassination.<sup>96</sup> From the perspective of epistolary style, however, the letter's most striking feature is its fulsome acknowledgment in

the first fifty lines or so of the many services that Matius has performed for Cicero in the past. This show of appreciation begins with an emphatic assertion of the ties of friendship that exist between them (Fam. 11.27.2): *quantum memoria repetere praeterita possum, nemo est mihi te amicus antiquior. sed vetustas habet aliquid commune cum multis, amor non habet. dilexi te quod die cognovi, meque a te diligere iudicavi*. ("As far back in the past as my memory extends, no friend of mine is of longer standing than you. But length of acquaintance is something which many share in some degree, affection is not. I held you in esteem from the first day we met, and believed that I was esteemed by you.") There are a couple of familiar features here. First, Cicero explicitly reviews the origins of their friendly association. As we have seen, this is a feature of the conventional commemoration of family ties and mutual services.<sup>97</sup> In this case he apparently cannot point to familial links, so instead he simply claims long-standing connections generally (which he then embellishes in the coming sections). Second, his phrase *dilexi te quod die cognovi* is similar in form and function to the remark we saw Cicero use in his letter to Appius at Fam. 3.4.2 (*te ipsum ex quo tempore tu me diligere coepisti, cottidie pluris feci*). This letter to Matius, then, is working within the general framework of an established polite routine. Cicero goes on, however, to develop it to remarkable lengths. He begins by recounting several ways in which Matius has helped him over the years (Fam. 11.27.2–3):

*quod enim vehementer mihi utile esse putabas nec inutile ipsi Caesari perfecisti, ut ille me diligeret, coleret, haberet in suis.... initio belli civilis cum Brundisium versus ires ad Caesarem, venisti ad me in Formianum. primum hoc ipsum quanti, praesertim temporibus illis!*

Through your efforts Caesar came to hold me in esteem, seek my company, look on me as one of his circle, a result that you considered highly advantageous to me and not disadvantageous to Caesar himself.... At the outset of the Civil War, when you were on your way to join Caesar at Brundisium, you paid me a visit in my house at Formiae. That to begin with meant a good deal, especially at such a time.

This show of appreciation is similar to the grateful remarks that Cicero makes in his letter to Cassius regarding his time in exile (Fam. 15.14.6). With Matius, however, he goes into greater detail. This catalogue of favors is embellished further in section 4 and continues in section 5 for another nine lines.

What are we to make of this lengthy routine? One possible line of approach is rhetorical: these sections are intended perhaps as a kind of

*captatio benevolentiae*, designed to render Matius more amenable to the intellectual arguments that follow in sections 7 and 8.<sup>98</sup> This interpretation squares nicely of course with the view of Cicero as inveterate orator; but it takes little account of the concerns with facework implicit in such strategies of politeness. To gain a better perspective on Cicero's aims here, we need to consider several other letters where he employs a similar kind of approach.

As Shackleton Bailey has pointed out, Cicero's remarks to Matius share resemblances with a passage in a letter written a few months earlier to C. Oppius, another powerful acquaintance of Caesar (*Fam.* 11.29; SB 335).<sup>99</sup> Cicero at this time (July 44 B.C.) was considering a trip to Greece in order to evade the growing political crisis in Italy. His letter is in essence a thank you note for Oppius' recent advice on his plan, advice imparted both by written communication and via conversations with Atticus (*Fam.* 11.29.1). The letter is relatively brief (only three sections); nevertheless, Cicero embarks on an explicit acknowledgment of the *beneficia* that Oppius has performed for him in the recent past.<sup>100</sup> He begins by praising the integrity of Oppius' advice at the start of the civil war (*Fam.* 11.29.1), and then goes on to declare (*Fam.* 11.29.2): *equidem et ante hoc tempus te dilexi et semper me a te diligere sensi*. ("For my part, I held you in esteem even before that time and have always felt that I was esteemed by you.") As we have seen, such assertions of esteem are highly conventionalized. We find similar examples in his letters to Matius, Appius Claudius and Cassius (see appendix, no. 8c). Cicero then proceeds to acknowledge Oppius' assistance when he was in exile, as well as his friendship in the years that followed, especially after Caesar's death (*Fam.* 11.29.2).

Cicero's aim in this case seems social rather than rhetorical. He uses the letter to express gratitude to Oppius and to consolidate his friendship with a man whose aid could be crucial during his proposed absence. There may also be a further element of political calculation behind this careful politeness. Cicero's decision to leave Italy left him open to criticism for deserting the senate at precisely the moment that it needed strong leadership. His departure would thus be the subject of much discussion and debate among his peers. This letter to Oppius—which Cicero could reasonably expect to be shown to their mutual acquaintances—slyly helps to justify his decision. It makes clear that the journey was not undertaken lightly, and that he had received the approval of men such as Oppius and Atticus.<sup>101</sup> Whatever the case, the letter also demonstrates both the ease with which Roman aristocrats slipped into this way of writing, and the degree of formality that often prevailed in these circles. Interaction with such men regularly required punctilious displays of respect.

A rather different example of this kind of routine appears in a letter written in late 46 B.C. to C. Trebonius (*Fam.* 15.21; SB 207). Cicero in this case

thanks Trebonius for a book in which he has celebrated a number of the orator's witticisms.<sup>102</sup> As he does so, Cicero embarks on a review of the kind services that Trebonius has performed for him in past times (*Fam.* 15.21.2):

*nam ut illa omittam quae civitate teste fecisti, cum mecum inimicitias communicavisti, cum me contionibus tuis defendisti, cum quaestor in mea atque in publica causa consulum partis suscepisti, cum tribuno plebis quaestor non paruisti, cui tuus praesertim collega pareret; ut haec recentia, quae meminero semper, obliviscar, quae tua sollicitudo de me in armis, quae laetitia in reditu, quae cura, qui dolor cum ad te curae et dolores mei perferrentur, Brundisium denique te ad me ventu-  
rum fuisse nisi subito in Hispaniam missus esses.*

Suppose I leave out of consideration what you did in full public view, when you made my enemy [i.e. Clodius] yours, defended me in your speeches, as Quaestor took on yourself the duty of the Consuls on my behalf and the public's, and as Quaestor refused to obey the orders of a Tribune, even though your colleague obeyed them. Suppose I forgot the matters of recent date, which I shall always remember—your concern for me at the war, your happiness at my return, your anxiety and distress when you were told of my anxieties and distress, your intention to visit me at Brundisium had you not suddenly been ordered to Spain.

At the end of this extended *praeteritio*, Cicero finally turns to express his appreciation of the book itself (*Fam.* 15.21.2):

*liber iste quem mihi misisti quantam habet declarationem amoris tui! primum quod tibi facetum videtur quicquid ego dixi, quod alii fortasse non item; deinde quod illa, sive faceta sunt sive sic, fiunt narrante te venustissima, quin etiam ante quam ad me veniatur risus omnis paene consumitur.*

This book you have sent me, what a declaration of your affection! To begin with, you find wit in every saying of mine—others perhaps would not; and then, these things, whether witty or run-of-the-mill, become utterly charming when you are their *raconteur*. In fact the laugh is nearly all over before *I* come on the scene.

Cicero here characterizes Trebonius' gift as a declaration of his *amor* for the orator (*declarationem amoris tui*). As we shall see later in our discussion

of letter 6, professions of *amor* feature regularly in aristocratic correspondence. Indeed, Cicero refers several further times in his letter to Trebonius to their mutual affection. (See *amore* and *quantum me amares* in section 1; *si te non amarem, me a te amari* and *amore* in section 3; *amore* and *te a me amari* in section 5.) We may suspect then that Cicero's extended show of appreciation is prompted largely by the social dynamics of gift-giving. Trebonius' *declaratio amoris* requires some form of gift in return.<sup>103</sup> One possibility that Cicero seems to have contemplated was a role for Trebonius in one of his dialogues.<sup>104</sup> For the moment, however, Cicero can make some sort of repayment through a *commemoratio* in words. The letter's extended show of appreciation thus functions as a metaphorical gift and an expression of his own reciprocal *amor* for Trebonius.<sup>105</sup>

Rather surprisingly, we also find a similar routine in one of Cicero's letters to Atticus (*Att.* 1.17; SB 17).<sup>106</sup> In general, of course, the letters to Atticus are characterized by an easy informality, one that seems to reflect the real intimacy enjoyed between the two men. In this particular letter, however, written in 61 B.C., Cicero adopts an unusually formal tone with his friend. This unexpected manner is deployed as Cicero addresses various tensions that have arisen recently between Atticus and Cicero's brother, Quintus. In particular, Quintus, recently appointed governor of Asia, had evidently invited Atticus to serve on his staff. When Atticus declined, Quintus seems to have responded rather rudely, making disparaging comments about Atticus' social position and career in commerce. (These details can be inferred from *Att.* 1.17.5; see also *Att.* 1.16.14; SB 16.) Cicero thus attempts in this letter to make amends by insisting that he regards Atticus as a social equal, and by assuring him that his chosen career as an equestrian businessman is a perfectly respectable one. He then proceeds to embark on an appreciative recapitulation of Atticus' past services to him (*Att.* 1.17.5–6):

*vera quidem laude probitatis, integritatis, diligentiae, religionis neque me tibi neque quemquam antepono, amoris vero erga me, cum a fraterno <a>more domesticoque discessi, tibi primas defero. vidi enim, vidi penitusque perspexi in meis variis temporibus et sollicitudines et laetitias tuas. fuit mihi saepe et laudis nostrae gratulatio tua iucunda et timoris consolatio grata. quin mihi nunc te absente non solum consilium, quo tu excellis, sed etiam sermonis communicatio, quae mihi suavissima tecum solet esse, maxime deest.*

In the things that bring true glory—uprightness, integrity, conscientiousness, fidelity to obligation—I put you second neither to myself nor to any other man, while as to affection toward me, leaving aside

my brother and my home circle, I give you first prize. For I have seen—seen and become thoroughly acquainted with—your anxieties and joys in the varied fortunes of my career. Your congratulations at my successes have often given me pleasure and your consolation at times of anxiety have been welcome. Indeed, at the present time I badly miss in your absence not only the advice, in which you excel, but also our habitual exchange of talk, which is such a delight to me.

Cicero himself acknowledges the unusually formal and explicit nature of this routine (*harum rerum commemoratio*): in the twenty years or so of their friendship up to this point, he has (he claims) left these things unsaid out of a sense of *verecundia* (*Att.* 1.17.7). Now, however, prompted by Atticus' own attempts to justify his way of life, Cicero feels the need to make clear his esteem and affection for his friend. To do so he leans on the kind of polite routine that he employs with less intimate political associates. This formality is an emphatic gesture of respect to his friend. The *commemoratio* functions as a kind of honorific routine designed to restore some of his friend's damaged *dignitas* and prestige.<sup>107</sup>

This example provides perhaps our closest parallel to the situation that faces Cicero in his spat with Matius. This relationship too is under some strain, and his celebration of the various *beneficia* that Matius has performed on his behalf similarly helps to restore the damage to his *dignitas*. This symbolic compensation is all the more necessary because, as the involvement of Trebatius Testa shows, their dispute was by now a semipublic one. Matters of face are at stake. Cicero's generous remarks thus present a very explicit show of respect to his aggrieved adversary. From this courteous platform, he can then try to convince both Matius and interested onlookers that any differences between them have nothing to do with personal standing; they are differences merely in intellectual opinion.

These polite remarks, however, have not always received a kind reception from modern scholars. Indeed, Shackleton Bailey refers scathingly to Cicero's inveterate "hypocrisy" in the letter.<sup>108</sup> The criticism is fair up to a point; but it does little to elucidate the social and epistolary conventions that underpin the letter's composition. Matius (we may suppose) would have been sensitive to these cues and would have appreciated the opening sections for what they are: a polite honorific routine. In a society where so much importance was attached to public prestige, this display of respect and deference counted for a good deal. Whether the letter's sentiments corresponded exactly with what Cicero privately thought was largely irrelevant to the social transaction. What mattered was that he had performed these deferential courtesies with due care and commitment. And Matius for his part responds with reciprocal

civility.<sup>109</sup> His pleasantries, too, could be characterized as similarly hollow; but they likewise do their job of ensuring that Cicero is shown the appropriate degree of respect. Within the aristocratic economy of *dignitas* polite language had an important role to play.

## Letter 6: Cicero to Scribonius Curio the Younger (*Fam.* 2.4; SB 48)

Cicero declares the aim of our next letter explicitly: to bear witness to his affection (*testificandi amoris*) for the addressee, Scribonius Curio.<sup>110</sup> As we have just seen, Cicero uses the word *amor* quite frequently in his correspondence.<sup>111</sup> At times he applies it to his own feelings of affection; on other occasions, he uses it to characterize the warm feelings evident in letters from his addressee (a strategy no less important for generating a sense of mutual regard).<sup>112</sup> From one perspective, this use of *amor* and its cognates in the context of friendship is not especially remarkable. Cicero himself claims that the word *amicitia* derives from the verb *amo*, and he refers casually enough in his treatise on friendship to the *amor amici* (the affection that exists between friends).<sup>113</sup> There are, however, different degrees of friendship, and we may well doubt whether Cicero's utilitarian political relationships had much in common with the highly idealized form celebrated in *De Amicitia*. Moreover, the noun *amor* is used *most* often in romantic contexts and to describe the strong bonds of affection between close family members.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, the verb *amo* usually conveys an especially strong emotional attachment.<sup>115</sup> The deployment of these terms in the realm of political friendships is in this respect rather surprising. The same can be said for the phrase *te mihi carum habeo* ("I consider you dear to me"), which appears both in expressions of affection to family members and to men such as Appius Claudius, with whom, as we have seen, Cicero enjoyed a troubled relationship.<sup>116</sup>

In such instances, we may suppose that aristocrats are appropriating language regularly used in intimate situations and employing it in contexts in which relations are more distant.<sup>117</sup> In doing so, they attempt to characterize these relationships as based on true affection and intimacy. This process is best understood as the cultivation of a socially acceptable "polite fiction." We are familiar from our own experience perhaps with the convenience of such fictions in individual social encounters. We may enthuse, for example, over unwanted gifts from loved ones in order to save them embarrassment and disappointment; or we may determinedly ignore the congealed fried egg in a colleague's beard so as not to draw attention to his incompetence in personal grooming. (In both scenarios, the aim is protect the addressee's face.)

But, as sociolinguists have noted, this kind of polite fiction can also operate on a much larger scale within a linguistic community. Nancy Sakamoto and Reiko Naotsuka, for example, suggest that a fundamental polite fiction in operation in North American society is that “you and I are equals,” whereas in Japan the opposite fiction (that “you are my superior”) tends to prevail.<sup>118</sup> Thus a Japanese host may prefer not to engage immediately in conversation with a visitor in order to convey the polite notion that “I am in awe of you as my superior.” The North American style of interaction, by contrast, would usually proceed according to the collegial fiction that “you and I are close friends,” with conversation being used to reduce any sense of social distance.<sup>119</sup> There is a strong expectation that these “scripts” be acted out (temporarily at least), whatever the actual status of those involved.

We may have reservations about extending such generalizations too far; but it is reasonable enough to suppose that linguistic communities bring to certain types of encounter a set of mutually understood expectations that provide a basic structure for their interaction. We can hypothesize then that one polite fiction that often prevailed in Roman aristocratic encounters was that “you and I care for each other deeply.” Certainly this ethos did not operate in every situation. As we have seen, displays of respect and deference were very important in elite circles. At times, it was important to emphasize and entrench status differences. But, on other occasions, the need to negotiate and establish alliances seems to have promoted a style of interaction in which the fiction that “you and I care deeply for each other” was energetically cultivated.

A modest form of this polite fiction is evident in the tactful aristocratic deployment of the term *amicus*. As Peter Brunt has observed, “Courtesy or expediency often required that one senator should style another as his friend.”<sup>120</sup> In certain contexts, however, this polite exaggeration was taken further. As we have seen, M. Marcellus employs a degree of urbane overstatement in order to convey the impression that he and Cicero enjoy a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. This pose allows the two parties to manufacture a safe space in which they can conduct their business. Other correspondents extend such fictions still further and represent their esteem and regard more dynamically as *amor*. The affiliative intent behind such gambits is usually appreciated by the addressee, who in turn upholds and develops the fiction.

Another common strategy of affiliative politeness functions in much the same way: the use of the adjective *meus* with direct address (e.g., *mi Plance*). Cicero in his letters uses this form of address with some twenty acquaintances, while he himself is addressed as *mi Cicero* by ten of his correspondents.<sup>121</sup> The main purpose of this gambit is to suggest a degree of close familiarity with the addressee.<sup>122</sup> Like the use of *amor* and *te carum*



*habeo*, this strategy derives from the sphere of intimate relationships. Cicero addresses his brother Quintus in this manner, as well as Tiro and Atticus. Its use with less familiar acquaintances thus represents another example of polite overstatement. The writer depicts their relationship as closer and more intimate than it actually is.<sup>123</sup>

Again, social discernment is crucial in the deployment of this kind of strategy. It is precisely this discernment of course that is lacking in Horace's tiresome social climber of *Satire* 1.9. His assertively familiar form of address (*dulcissime rerum*, line 4) is disastrously inappropriate to his relationship with the poet, to whom he is known only by name (*nomine tantum*, line 3).<sup>124</sup> In a similar way the injudicious use of *mi* with direct address could strike a jarring, overfamiliar note with certain correspondents. It is significant, for example, that Cicero does not use this form of address with Appius Claudius. Evidently, he is comfortable enough using certain types of energetic overstatement in his attempts to cultivate their relationship; but he is not prepared to go so far as to claim this degree of relaxed affinity with the man. Likewise, Cicero generally eschews its use in his letters to Marcus Brutus.<sup>125</sup>

The Roman aristocrat, then, had to judge carefully when to essay such polite fictions and how energetically to pursue them. It is worth stressing, however, that many of the strategies of affiliative politeness that we have identified would have helped in their construction. Compliments, overstatement, the use of intensifiers, congratulations and expressions of joy, as well as assertions of *benevolentia* and *amor*, all provided a vocabulary and repertoire of strategies from which such fictions could be proffered and upheld.

With these facts in mind, we may turn (at last) to Cicero's letter to Curio. The letter provides an important contrast to the approach that Cicero adopts with Cassius Longinus in *Fam.* 15.14. In the latter case, as we have seen, Cicero tries to cultivate their *amicitia* using relatively formal language and polite routines. With Curio, however, he largely dispenses with conventionalized phrases and pursues a more ludic approach to their epistolary encounter. Indeed, his declaration of *amor* at the close of the letter suggests that the two men have already established a style of interaction based on energetic polite fictions. The letter thus stands toward one end of the spectrum of politeness, where greater emphasis is placed on affiliative strategies, and fewer elements aim to convey respect (*Fam.* 2.4; SB 48):

*epistularum genera multa esse non ignoras sed unum illud certissimum, cuius causa inventa res ipsa est, ut certiores faceremus absentis si quid esset quod eos scire aut nostra aut ipsorum interesset. huius generis litteras a me profecto non exspectas. tuarum enim rerum domesticos habes et scriptores et nuntios, in meis autem rebus nihil est sane novi.*

*reliqua sunt epistularum genera duo, quae me magno opere delectant, unum familiare et iocosum, alterum severum et grave. utro me minus deceat uti non intellego. iocerne tecum per litteras? civem mehercule non puto esse, qui temporibus his ridere possit. an gravius aliquid scribam? quid est quod possit graviter a Cicerone scribi ad Curionem nisi de re publica? atqui in hoc genere haec mea causa est ut neque ea <quae sentio audeam neque ea> quae non sentio velim scribere.*

*quam ob rem, quoniam mihi nullum scribendi argumentum relictum est, utar ea clausula qua soleo teque ad studium summae laudis cohortabor. est enim tibi gravis adversaria constituta et parata incredibilis quaedam exspectatio; quam tu una re facillime vinctes, si hoc statueris, quarum laudum gloriam adamaris, quibus artibus eae laudes comparantur, in iis esse laborandum. in hanc sententiam scriberem plura, nisi te tua sponte satis incitatum esse confiderem. et hoc, quicquid attigi, non feci inflammandi tui causa sed testificandi amoris mei.*

That there are many different categories of letters you are aware. But the most clearly established, the purpose in fact for which letter-writing was invented, is to inform the absent of what is desirable for them to know, whether in our interest or their own. Letters of this kind I suppose you do not expect from me, since you have your domestic correspondents and messengers to tell you about your affairs, and there is nothing very new to report about mine. That leaves two categories of letter which give me great pleasure; one familiar and jocular, the other serious and grave. Which would be the less fitting for me to use I don't know. Am I to joke with you by letter? On my word, the man who can laugh during these present times is not in my opinion a true Roman citizen. Or should I write something more serious? What is there for Cicero to write seriously about to Curio except public affairs? But on that subject my predicament is that I dare not write what I think and do not care to write what I don't think.

Well then, since there is no topic left for me to write on, I shall resort to my usual conclusion and urge you to strive for the highest glory. You have a formidable adversary ready and waiting: a quite unbelievable degree of public expectation. This you will easily overcome, but in one way only, and that is by determining to work hard at those pursuits which bring the kind of glory you have set your heart on. I would write more along these lines, if I were not sure that you are motivated sufficiently by your own desire. Even this little I have said, not to kindle *your* enthusiasm, but to demonstrate *my* affection.

To understand Cicero's relatively informal approach here, we need to explore in more detail the likely context of its composition. Curio at this time was on the staff of C. Claudius Pulcher in Asia and thus many weeks of travel away.<sup>126</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that Cicero does not use the letter to carry out a piece of formal aristocratic business such as making a request or recommendation. Its sole *raison d'être* is the cultivation of friendly relations with Curio. Although such courtship was an important part of the ambitious aristocrat's regular business, it seems unlikely that Cicero would have sent one of his own couriers such a long way to deliver this one brief message. The more probable scenario, based on evidence from elsewhere in his correspondence, is that he handed this letter to a friend, or a friend's courier, who was already planning to travel overseas. Indeed, it was common practice for friends to let each other know when one of their couriers was about to make a trip abroad, and Cicero on occasions complains when someone has not bothered to show him this courtesy.<sup>127</sup> This courier would then collect letters for delivery from a number of mutual friends before leaving Rome.

We should imagine then Cicero being informed that a friend's courier (or perhaps the friend himself) is about to set out for Curio's province, and the orator quickly jotting down (or dictating) these few lines of good wishes, even though he has nothing especially important to relate. It is clear enough that Cicero was not in Curio's close circle of friends; as he himself notes, other acquaintances were sending regular letters to Curio with information on political developments at Rome. Nevertheless, Cicero is shrewd enough to exploit every opportunity to cultivate relations with a man who was to play a crucial role in politics in the following years.

Freed from the need to negotiate formal business, Cicero is able to indulge in a more urbane form of social courtship. In this case the wit resides largely in his self-referential musings about what kind of letter to write. As Cugusi notes, this topic is a fairly common one in ancient epistolography, usually presented in terms of the writer not knowing what news to relate.<sup>128</sup> Here, however, Cicero handles the cliché in an urbane and novel fashion, turning the problem into a mini-disquisition on epistolary genres and pondering the best type of letter to write even as he composes it. He also uses these ruminations as a springboard for contemporary political comment, albeit rather generalized (*civem me hercule* etc.), followed by a gentle compliment to Curio's political nous and influence (*quid est quod* etc.). Finally, in a sort of mock admission of defeat, Cicero resorts to exhortation, which (as he notes) is designed to show his concern and admiration for the young man.

As a whole, then, the letter becomes something of a *tour de force* of epistolary *inventio*, as Cicero endeavors to write some twenty-five lines on the subject of having nothing of real import to say. In this respect, it has more in

common with the letter to Cassius Longinus than might first appear. There, too, as we have seen, Cicero works hard to generate polite platitudes in order to consolidate their friendly relations. In that case, he leans on conventional routines and comments made in Cassius' previous letter; with Curio, however, his approach is more vivacious. The two letters thus highlight the varied interactional styles that Cicero could adopt to essentially the same basic task of cultivating political contacts. His choice of style would have been shaped by a range of contextual and personal factors: the relative age and status of the correspondent, their degree of familiarity, the precise business at hand, and, of course, the correspondent's individual character.<sup>129</sup> With Cassius, Cicero judges that a degree of restraint and formality is appropriate. In the case of Curio, he seems to be exploiting a more affectionate mode of interaction that has already been established between them. Cicero evidently feels able to indulge in a more jovial manner, confident that the fiction of their mutual *amor* will be appreciated and reciprocated.<sup>130</sup> We get a sense, too, that the cultivation of this fiction, together with its correspondingly energetic manner, was associated with a certain urbanity and hipness. The writer presents himself (and so, too, the recipient) as forgoing the usual stodgy concern with power and *dignitas*. In its place, a genial, outgoing poise and aplomb. This is an effective affiliative strategy, and, as we shall see, these urbane pretensions underlie many of the polite exaggerations and fictions in the correspondence of men such as Munatius Plancus. On occasions, however, as our next letter shows, these fictions had to be balanced delicately with deferential shows of respect.

### Letter 7: Cicero to M. Licinius Crassus (*Fam.* 5.8; SB 25)

Cicero's only extant letter to M. Licinius Crassus (cos. 70 and 55 B.C.) was written in January 54 B.C. at a time when Crassus was at the height of his power and influence.<sup>131</sup> Having joined with Caesar and Pompey several years earlier to form the so-called First Triumvirate, Crassus was now busy preparing an army for his ill-fated campaign in Parthia and left Rome for Syria in November 55 B.C. Cicero's relations with Crassus during this period were strained. They had never been warm friends, but in recent months their goodwill had evidently deteriorated to such an extent that Pompey insisted Cicero seek some kind of formal reconciliation with the man.<sup>132</sup> Cicero himself refers to a face-to-face reconciliation at a dinner party before Crassus' departure, and this subsequent letter seems designed to consolidate their new relationship in a quite formal way.<sup>133</sup> Cicero begins by describing in detail the

support that he has recently shown in the senate for Crassus' affairs (*Fam.* 5.8.1; SB 25):

*quantum tadt meum studium exstiterit dignitatis tuae vel tuendae vel etiam augendae, non dubito quin ad te omnes tui scripserint. non enim fuit aut mediocre aut obscurum aut eius modi quod silentio posset praeteriri. nam et cum consulibus et cum multis consularibus tanta contentione decertavi quanta numquam antea ulla in causa suscepique mihi perpetuam propugnationem pro omnibus ornamentis tuis veterique nostrae necessitudini iam diu debitum sed multa varietate temporum interruptum officium cumulate reddidi.*

I do not doubt that all your friends have written to you of my devotion in defending or even enhancing your prestige. For it was neither ordinary nor understated, or the kind of thing that could be passed over in silence. I fought it out with the Consuls and many of the Consulars with a vehemence which I have never before displayed in any cause, and took on myself the permanent role of protagonist on behalf of all that will bring you distinction, and repaid more than amply the service which has long been owing to our old friendship, but which has been disrupted by many variations of circumstance.

These opening remarks develop in emphatic form the conventional concern that an aristocrat is supposed to show for a friend's *dignitas* (see appendix, no. 7). Note in particular the expanded phrase *vel tuendae vel etiam augendae*, the sequence *aut...aut...aut*, and the vocabulary of overstatement (*numquam antea*, *ulla in causa*, *perpetuam*). Cicero here is working hard to try to establish his credentials as a reliable political ally. But while he can plausibly point to his recent actions in the senate to prove his support for Crassus' affairs, it is not quite so easy to find similar examples from earlier times. This fact makes it difficult for him to embark on the kind of commemorative routine that we have seen in his letters to other powerful politicians. His solution is to construct the polite fiction that their friendship would in fact have flourished in previous years, had not the troubles of the times interfered. Indeed, he goes on to claim that he has always had a desire for Crassus' friendship, but that other powerful individuals have repeatedly tried to turn him against the triumvir (*Fam.* 5.8.2):

*neque mehercule umquam mihi tui aut colendi aut ornandi voluntas defuit. sed quaedam pestes hominum laude aliena dolentium et te non numquam a me alienarunt et me aliquando immutarunt tibi.*

And on my word I never lacked the will to cultivate your friendship and contribute to your advancement. But certain poisonous individuals, who resent others gaining glory, estranged you from me more than once, and at times changed my attitude to you.

Although this version of events may be questionable, it is not entirely implausible. *Invidia*, as we have already noted, was a powerful and disruptive force in Roman politics, and it affords a convenient pretext here. This version of events is also less objectionable perhaps than would have been an earnest assertion of *benevolentia* that entirely ignored the tensions of previous years. Cicero shows Crassus the respect of not being *that* hypocritical. And although the fiction may seem a little strained, it is important to note that Cicero is not its sole beneficiary; it diplomatically absolves Crassus too of all blame for the previous tensions in their relationship. Any wrongdoing is deftly attributed to an unnamed third party.

Cicero's next move is to solicit Crassus' collusion as he extends this fiction a step further to claim that their relationship has long been based on trust and cooperation (*Fam.* 5.8.3):

*de me sic existimes ac tibi persuadeas vehementer velim, non me repentina aliqua voluntate aut fortuito ad tuam amplitudinem meis officiis amplectendam incidisse sed, ut primum forum attigerim, spectasse semper ut tibi possem quam maxime esse coniunctus. quo quidem ex tempore memoria teneo neque meam tibi observantiam neque mihi tuam summam benevolentiam ac liberalitatem defuisse.*

As for me personally, I would like you to believe and be convinced that I have not just happened to support your standing with my services through any accident or sudden whim, but have always aimed ever since my entry into public life to be on the closest terms with you. Since those days I recall no failure of attention on my part or goodwill and generosity in the highest measure on yours.

There is an attempt here, as in his other commemorative routines, to extend the origins of their association some way into the past, although Cicero keeps his phrasing helpfully vague: he claims merely that he has endeavored to be on the best terms with Crassus as far back as he can remember. The deferential slant here is also important. Cicero depicts himself as taking the junior role in their partnership: it is he who has shown *observantia* to Crassus, while Crassus has bestowed on him *summam benevolentiam ac liberalitatem*.<sup>134</sup> We may suspect an element of overstatement here, but because the fiction works

to Crassus' credit, it is one in which he should be happy to collude. Having established this complimentary dynamic, Cicero can now ask that past grievances be forgotten (*Fam.* 5.8.3): *si quae inciderunt non tam re quam suspicione violata, ea, cum fuerint et falsa et inania, sint evulsa ex omni memoria vitae nostrae*. ("If in the meanwhile certain infringements, surmised rather than real, have affected our relations, since they were both mistaken and without substance, let them be utterly eradicated from our memories and our lives.") Crassus is politely invited to indulge in the fiction that their conflicts in the past were *et falsa et inania*, the product of mere *suspicio*.

It is worth noting here the phrase *tibi persuadeas... velim*, which appears fairly frequently in Cicero's more formal correspondence.<sup>135</sup> Its use in rather awkward contexts by Mark Antony and the younger Cato suggests that it was a stereotyped formula of politeness.<sup>136</sup> The expression ostensibly requests a favor; but because this favor is often complimentary or welcome to the addressee, the expression's main effect is an air of urbanely earnest concern. The polite subjunctive *velim* reinforces this courteous, civil tone.<sup>137</sup> At *Fam.* 3.2.2 (SB 65), for example, Cicero invites Appius Claudius to persuade himself that he is very dear to the orator. Cicero affects to take great care over a request that is scarcely an imposition at all.<sup>138</sup> In his letter to Crassus, then, Cicero deftly modifies this use to invite Crassus' complicity in the fiction of their long-standing cordiality. Their reconciliation requires goodwill on both sides, and Cicero elicits Crassus' engagement in an especially smooth and solicitous manner (note the use of both *existimes* and *persuadeas*, as well as the intensifier *vehementer*).

The final two sections of the letter present a formal pledge of support (*Fam.* 5.8.4): *ego vero tibi profiteor atque polliceor eximium et singulare meum studium in omni genere officii quod ad honestatem et gloriam tuam spectet*. ("On my side, I profess and promise you my exceptional and exemplary devotion in every kind of service that promotes your dignity and glory.") As we have seen, such promises are a regular feature of aristocratic correspondence. This example, however, is remarkable. The verbs, adjectives, and nouns are all doubled for emphasis (*profiteor atque polliceor / eximium et singulare / honestatem et gloriam*); and Cicero presses the point by claiming that he will outdo everyone else in Rome in his support of Crassus' family (*Fam.* 5.8.4): *in quo etiam si multi mecum contendunt, tamen cum reliquis omnibus tum Crassidis tuis iudicibus omnis facile superabo*. ("Many may be my rivals, but by the verdict of everyone else, and of your sons too, I shall easily defeat them all.") Finally, the pledge is endowed with a particular solemnity (*Fam.* 5.8.5):

*has litteras velim existimes foederis habituras esse vim, non epistulae, meque ea quae tibi promitto ac recipio sanctissime esse observaturum diligentissimeque esse facturum.*

I would like you to consider that this letter has the force of a covenant, not a regular dispatch, and that the promises and undertakings I give you will be religiously respected and carried out in every detail.

The use here of *foedus* and *sanctissime*, with their religious and ethical overtones, goes far beyond the usual epistolary conventions.<sup>139</sup> Cicero's formal reconciliation with Crassus clearly requires far more elevated and impressive language than is used in regular offers of political support. Note, too, the coupling of *observaturum* and *facturum*, the further use of the polite formula *velim existimes*, and the additional superlative *diligentissime*.

These earnest professions have drawn some disparaging comment from modern scholars, especially with regard to Cicero's sincerity (or lack of it).<sup>140</sup> Human relationships, however, are more complex than the binary opposition between "sincere" and "insincere" allows. Our concern with face and social status, as well as our desire to avoid conflict, often lead us to attach a positive value to the concealment of unpleasant or awkward truths. These polite fictions can contribute constructively to our management of social relationships. Crassus, as we have suggested, was not entirely blameless in his conflicts with Cicero. The letter's invitation to collude in the suggested fictions thus lets him off the hook as much as it does Cicero himself. Indeed, Cicero's approach to this process of reconciliation becomes all the more understandable when we recognize that the polite fiction "you and I are very dear to each other" was a familiar one in aristocratic circles. This is a social façade that powerful men were used to adopting in their dealings with each other. The letter to Crassus constitutes in effect an embellished and extended version of this established dynamic, and employs many of its conventionalized strategies.

Likewise, the "verbose and repetitive character" of the letter may owe more to its social context than to Cicero's insincerity. It is instructive that in Cicero's face-to-face reconciliation with his nephew discussed earlier, Quintus feels the need to make his case *multis verbis* ("at great length"), and to engage Cicero himself as a guarantor for his future behavior (*Att.* 16.5.2; SB 410). Cicero in his letter to Crassus essentially converts these conciliatory elements into epistolary form. His emphatic, fulsome language corresponds to Quintus' *multis verbis*; and he endows the letter itself with the authority of guarantor (*foederis vim*). To a degree, these elements are imposed on him by the letter's social context and function.<sup>141</sup>

This is not to say that Cicero enjoyed writing the letter, or to deny that Crassus and other readers could readily perceive a gap between these professions and his actual opinions regarding the triumvir. But, as we have noted in the case of Matius, private opinion was often less important than public appearance. The crucial point is that Cicero has performed this show



of deference scrupulously and declared his goodwill and future support of Crassus "on-record." By doing so, he demonstrates the requisite sense of *verecundia*. The respective positions of the two men in the social hierarchy have been reaffirmed. From this perspective, whether Cicero actually thought Crassus morally bankrupt is irrelevant. Political alliances in Rome regularly depended on the determined construction and mutual maintenance of such polite fictions.

## Concluding Remarks

This chapter has identified various strategies of politeness commonly used by Roman aristocrats in their epistolary negotiations with each other. While many of these occur as part of regular patronal and political business, their conventionalization does not derive *primarily* from the need for effective communication. Most of the contexts in which they appear are inherently face-threatening. Even the apparently simple job of passing on thanks or congratulations could cause offense if not accomplished appropriately. The development of these conventionalized phrases was thus inextricably tied to the negotiation of social relationships—that is, with issues of politeness.

As we have seen, the politeness of respect played an important role in these situations. From a general perspective, the use of these conventionalized expressions constituted in itself a show of respect and *verecundia*. The writer implicitly demonstrates his desire to conduct business according to an established and customary framework, one that usually involves restraint and formality. More specifically, aristocrats regularly convey respect through the punctilious registering of thanks, congratulations and expressions of esteem, which give credit to, and so further affirm, the addressee's status. As our examples have shown, such niceties were omitted at one's peril.

The social dealings of the elite were thus often circumscribed by a high degree of formality. Even years into his relationship with Atticus, Cicero has to resort to a highly stylized routine at a moment of tension in order to pay proper respect to his friend's social standing. Such formality was in all likelihood the default mode for exchanges between powerful men. The need to uphold and project an image of influence in this highly competitive environment often precluded a casual familiarity among peers. Indeed, years of scrambling up the greasy political pole inevitably generated clashes and conflicts, betrayals and disappointments, resentments and suspicions. It is not surprising then that encounters between such men were often characterized by a degree of caution and social distance.

And yet the cultivation of these fragile relationships was a necessary part of political life for the ambitious aristocrat. Rarely was it practical or productive to abandon such associations entirely. Conventionalized expressions of goodwill, esteem and affection thus provided an important means through which to approach these negotiations. They helped to convey the writer's affiliative disposition in terms that were stylized yet respectful. As we have seen, these expressions were often drawn from the language regularly used in intimate contexts, and powerful aristocrats often represented their relationships as more engaged and affectionate than they actually were. Certainly the influence of *invidia* and gossip in aristocratic circles exerted pressure toward this form of exaggeration. Reserve and understatement could easily be misconstrued and lead to accusations of jealousy and ingratitude. But there was also a more constructive dimension to this polite overstatement. The generally animated tenor created by the use of superlatives, intensifiers, professions of *amor* and so on helped the writer to engage productively with his correspondent. Although the extent to which one pursued such strategies was a potentially tricky matter that called for astute social judgement, the assertive polite fiction that the two parties involved were very dear friends seems to have been one that was widely understood and frequently invoked. Indeed, as the examples presented in the appendix confirm, these strategies form part of a shared idiom of politeness that extends far beyond Cicero alone.<sup>142</sup>

The use of polite fictions, then, was not necessarily hypocritical or morally dubious. Their deployment often derived as much from consideration for others as from calculating, selfish motives. And as we saw in the case of Cicero's letter to Curio, the ostentatious cultivation of this fiction also helped to reinforce one's claims to belong to the sophisticated circles who engage in generous and ebullient civility. At the same time, however, there was always the potential for these fictions of friendship to be exploited in more cynical ways. We have already seen how some of the established conventions could be embellished or adapted for witty effect. In the next chapter, we consider how they could be manipulated for more questionable ends.

## 2

### From Polite Fictions to Hypocrisy

As we have seen, polite fictions do not necessarily involve cynical deception and hypocrisy. They are often well-intentioned attempts to reduce social embarrassment and tension. In the fraught and competitive world of the Roman aristocrat, such strategies provided one important means of manufacturing harmony and cooperation, at least on a temporary basis. Nevertheless, these polite conventions—like any convention—were open to self-interested manipulation. When the suspicion arose that one party was exploiting them for individual rather than mutual gain, this kind of language could acquire negative connotations, at times being characterized as empty flattery or deceptive ingratiation. And yet, as our discussion in this chapter will show, the line between flattery and polite praise—or between a friendly warmth of manner and cynical political courtship—was often hard to draw clearly. Judging such matters was not straightforward for Cicero and his contemporaries, and it is even harder for the modern reader. Indeed, the potential ambiguity in complimentary language is well documented in modern sociolinguistic studies. Janet Holmes, for example, notes that one and the same complimentary expression can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the relationship of the individuals involved.<sup>1</sup> When exchanged between equals and friends, compliments are readily accepted as tokens of solidarity and support; but in other situations where issues of power and status intrude, the same remarks may be viewed as fundamentally manipulative.<sup>2</sup> Judgments on such matters are inevitably context-bound. And although Cicero is certainly in a better position than we are to judge the language and likely motives of his correspondents,

he is no less susceptible to personal animosities or anxieties that may color his assessments. Given these difficulties in interpretation, the best approach perhaps is to examine individual cases where such concerns and uncertainties arise, and consider how Cicero and his contemporaries reacted to them.

## Distinguishing Good Politeness from Bad

In Rome's sharply hierarchical society, the assiduous and deferential cultivation of social contacts could often be categorized positively as *observantia*. Many of Cicero's letters of recommendation refer appreciatively to an acquaintance's diligence in fulfilling these social obligations.<sup>3</sup> But whether Cicero viewed a person's attentions favorably or not seems to have depended both on his own circumstances at the time, and on his perception of a person's more general consistency in behavior. In 54 B.C., for example, he seems to have taken some pleasure in Caesar's fulsome letters, describing them to his brother as charming (*suavis*) and to Atticus as effusively expansive (*uberrimis*).<sup>4</sup> He adopts, however, a far more cynical attitude toward Caesar's overtures a few years later at the end of 50 B.C. as the conflict between Pompey and Caesar escalates (*Att.* 7.3.11; *SB* 126): *ille mihi litteras blandas mittit. facit idem pro eo Balbus*. ("[Caesar] sends me ingratiating letters and Balbus does likewise on his behalf.") And yet we may wonder whether Caesar had changed his style of epistolary interaction significantly in the intervening years. The main difference (we may suspect) is the political situation in which Cicero finds himself.<sup>5</sup>

He adopts a similarly pejorative view of overtures made toward him by Appius Claudius Pulcher in 54 B.C. (*Q. Fr.* 2.11.2–3; *SB* 15): *de Commagene, quod rem totam discusseram, mirifice mihi et per se et per Pomponium blanditur Appius...quo genere commotus, ut dixi, Appius totum me amplexatur*. ("As for the man from Commagene [sc. Antiochus], since I have ruined his whole business, Appius is courting me in a quite remarkable fashion both in person and through Pomponius.... Appius, as I have said, was alarmed by this procedure and is now clasping me firmly to his breast.") Cicero thus regards Appius' overtures sardonically during this time of conflict and tension. And yet, as we saw in chapter 1, he is happy enough to accept Appius' pleasantries a few years later and even sedulously courts him in return. Again, it seems likely that Appius' manner was essentially the same in both situations; the difference lies in Cicero's greater amenability to such strategies at this later time.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, as we saw in the introductory chapter, when Terentia in May 49 B.C. was visited at their home in Cumae by Q. Hortensius (son of the famous orator), she regarded his various remarks about Cicero as earnest and respectful (*Att.* 10.16.5; *SB* 208: *sermone erat usus honorifico erga me*). Cicero

himself, however, is rather more skeptical when he meets Hortensius face-to-face the next day (*Att.* 10.17.1; SB 209): *Prid. Id. Hortensius ad me venit scripta epistula. vellem cetera eius. quam in me incredibilem ἐκτένεια!* ("Hortensius visited me on the 14th after my letter was written. If only the rest of his behavior were like this! Quite unbelievable ardor toward me!") Perhaps Hortensius adopted a very different kind of language in this second visit; but it is possible that what Terentia viewed as appropriately respectful language is regarded by Cicero himself as an attempt at manipulative ingratiation. Again, the matter may well be one of subjective interpretation.<sup>7</sup>

Cicero regularly uses the term *blandus* and its cognates to refer to language that seems overly effusive and manipulative.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, our understanding of the term is hampered by the fact that we have few firsthand examples of this kind of language. In the instances from Caesar, Appius Claudius, and Hortensius just cited, we have only paraphrase, not verbatim quote. In a couple of instances, however, Cicero does refer to specific phrases that strike him as smarmy and ingratiating. One appears in a letter to Atticus where Cicero makes the following request (*Att.* 16.2.2; SB 412): *sed amabo te, mi Attice (videsne quam blande?), omnia nostra, quoad eris Romae, ita gerito, regito, gubernato ut nihil a me exspectes.* ("But I beg of you, my dear fellow (do you see how ingratiatingly I ask?), do handle, manage, and direct all my affairs so long as you are in Rome without expecting any instructions from me.") The combination here of *mi Attice* with *amabo te* evidently strikes Cicero as typical of the more unctuous language sometimes deployed by his contemporaries (*videsne quam blande?*). As we have seen, *mi* with direct address is used quite frequently among aristocrats, although not in highly formal contexts. Its deployment requires a degree of social discernment since the expression lays direct claim to a degree of intimacy with the addressee. Such a claim may be quite appropriate among acquaintances who know each other well; but in some cases it could easily be perceived as a gambit calculated to manipulate the prevailing social dynamics.

This aspect evidently comes to the fore when it is combined with the expression *amabo te*. Cicero uses *amabo te* most frequently in his letters to Atticus and his brother Quintus;<sup>9</sup> he also employs the phrase in letters to younger urbane men such as Scribonius Curio and Cassius Longinus (in 45 B.C.), and it appears twice in letters from M. Caelius to Cicero.<sup>10</sup> That is, it seems to be used in relatively informal contexts, by men who lay claim to a certain degree of sophistication.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, in Roman comedy its use is limited almost exclusively to female characters, where it usually serves to soften the force of an imperative, turning a command into an earnest and solicitous request.<sup>12</sup> In Cicero's time then it may have retained something of an archaic and self-consciously affected air (perhaps like the English "I beg of you"). In

combination with *mi Attice*, the phrase seems to turn his polite request into something more mannered and ingratiating.

Cicero gives us a further hint regarding the nature of *blanditiae* in another remark to Atticus (*Att.* 12.3.1; SB 239):

*unum te puto minus blandum esse quam me aut, si uterque nostrum est aliquando adversus aliquem, inter nos certe numquam sumus. audi igitur me hoc ἀγορτεύτως dicentem. ne vivam, mi Attice, si mihi non modo Tusculanum, ubi ceteroqui sum libenter, sed μακάρων νῆσοι tanti sunt ut sine te sim totos dies.*

You alone in my opinion are even less inclined to ingratiating language than I am. Or if either of us on some occasion flatters another, we certainly never use such language between ourselves. So listen to me as I tell you this without a trace of duplicity: may I die, my dear Atticus, if I consider—I won't say Tusculum, where in other respects I pass my time pleasantly enough—but the Islands of the Blessed worth being without you for whole days on end.

Cicero here claims to be worried that his expression of sincere affection for Atticus may appear indistinguishable from the *blanditiae* sometimes exchanged between aristocrats. Again, *mi* with direct address is associated with this ingratiating language, but on this occasion it is combined with a fulsome compliment, a degree of overstatement (*totos dies*) and the exclamation *ne vivam*. Several important points arise here: the first is Cicero's claim that he is using these emphatic expressions in a straightforward way to convey his real affection toward Atticus. As we saw in chapter 1, conventionalized strategies of affiliative politeness tend to appropriate expressions regularly used in intimate relationships and employ them where the same intimacy does not prevail. The same evidently applies in situations where remarks can be characterized as *blanditiae*. Cicero here envisions using lively exclamations and earnest compliments quite naturally with one of his closest friends; the problem is that this engaging and effusive manner is regularly adopted by others who cannot claim the same kind of familiarity.

The second point is that, although the overstated and complimentary elements in Cicero's remarks find parallels in the conventionalized affiliative politeness that we identified in chapter 1, in this particular case they are combined with more presumptuous informal elements. The exclamation *ne vivam* in particular is colloquial in flavor and adds perhaps a touch of earnest chumminess that would be jarring if used with acquaintances who are not all that close; hence the suspicion of *blanditiae*.<sup>13</sup> Finally, it is worth

noting that Cicero's remark in effect admits that both Atticus and himself on occasions indulged in such polite but insincere effusions (note *si uterque nostrum* etc.). Evidently, situations arose quite frequently in the lives of busy patrons in which such language could play a part.

The language, then, of affiliative politeness and *blanditiae* overlapped to a considerable degree. Both aimed at suggesting a sense of solidarity and familiarity with the addressee, often through the use of compliments and overstatement. The more conventionalized strategies, however, make these claims in a relatively restrained way that takes care to show respect to the addressee. *Blanditiae*, by contrast, seem to be characterized in part by bolder assumptions of familiarity and intimacy, conveyed by the use of less formal idioms. Nevertheless the lines remain difficult to draw, as an example from one of Asinius Pollio's letters to Cicero illustrates.

Pollio does not seem to have had an especially close or friendly relationship with Cicero. Indeed, his later judgments on Cicero's character and literary achievements suggest a significant gulf in temperament between them.<sup>14</sup> In 43 B.C. he was serving as governor of Further Spain when hostilities broke out between the senate and Mark Antony. He thus became involved in cagey negotiations with various parties as he tested the political ground. (He was eventually to join forces with Antony.)<sup>15</sup> In *Fam.* 10.31, he writes to Cicero about recent political developments and adopts a quite respectful and formal tone as he does so. At the very end, he adds an essentially formulaic remark, thanking Cicero for his support of a mutual acquaintance (*Fam.* 10.31.6; SB 368): *quod familiarem meum tuorum numero habes, opinione tua mihi gratius est.* ("Your taking my friend into your circle is more welcome to me than you imagine.") He goes on, however, to embellish this conventional comment with the following claim: *invideo illi tamen quod ambulat et iocatur tecum. quaeres quanti aestimem; si umquam licuerit vivere in otio, experieris. nulum enim vestigium abs te discessurus sum.* ("But I envy the fact that he gets to walk and joke with you. You will ask how highly I value that: if we are ever allowed to live in peace, you will find out for yourself. I shall not move a yard from your side.") This remark conveys affection for Cicero in a far more engaging and personal way than the conventional language of friendship. Its admission of jealousy (*invideo illi*) is urbanely disarming; the image of Pollio's friend walking and joking with Cicero is more vivid than a formal profession of *amor*; and the imagined question introduced by *quaeres* adds liveliness.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the claim that Pollio will never leave Cicero's side functions as a pledge while eschewing the phrasing typically used in formal language. Pollio thus conveys a charmingly affable attitude without using either the conventional language of friendship or the ingratiating phrases that Cicero identifies with typical *blanditiae*.<sup>17</sup>

What Cicero made of these remarks, however, is difficult to judge. Did he view them as essentially perfunctory, albeit urbanely phrased? Did he appreciate them as a welcome gesture of goodwill in uncertain times? Or did he perhaps regard them rather more cynically, as a clever attempt at ingratiating that was not to be trusted? Without further information about the pair's dealings with each other up to this point, it is impossible to tell. But certainly Cicero was all too aware of the element of deception that could lurk behind such professions, as the following observation in 46 B.C. to Papirius Paetus shows (*Fam.* 9.16.2; SB 190):

*sic enim color, sic observor ab omnibus iis qui a Caesare diliguntur ut ab iis me amari putem. tametsi non facile diiudicatur amor verus et fictus, nisi aliquod incidit eius modi tempus ut quasi aurum igni sic benevolentia fidelis periculo aliquo perspici possit.*

For I am treated with such attention and respect by all those who are held in esteem by Caesar that I believe they have an affection for me. Admittedly it is not easy to distinguish genuine affection from fake, unless a situation happens to arise in which the gold of loyal attachment can be discerned in the fire of danger.

Cicero here surveys the political game coolly and shows a shrewd awareness that the affiliative language and polite fictions so integral to political courtship were not always employed simply to ease the social tensions between powerful men. But even when armed with this knowledge, he was not always able to interpret an acquaintance's remarks accurately. In 58 B.C., for example, we find him realizing too late the deceptive intentions that such courtesies could conceal (*Q Fr.* 1.3.8; SB 3): *quantum Hortensio credendum sit nescio. me summa simulatione amoris summaque adsiduitate cotidiana sceleratissime insidiosissimeque tractavit adiuncto Q. Arrio.* ("How far Hortensius is to be trusted, I don't know. He treated *me* most wickedly and deceitfully, while energetically pretending affection and scrupulously keeping up our daily intercourse. He was joined in this by Quintus Arrius.") The circumstances that led to Hortensius' alleged betrayal may have been more complex than Cicero in his distraught state can appreciate or allow; but such apparent double-dealing was clearly an occupational hazard of Roman politics. Indeed, Caesar's agent Cornelius Balbus seems to have been especially adept at employing an obfuscatory, diplomatic style of language, as Cicero observes in a letter to Atticus as the tensions between Caesar and Pompey come to a head in 49 B.C. (*Att.* 9.5.3; SB 171): *intellego, serius equidem quam vellem propter epistulas sermonesque Balbi, sed video plane nihil aliud agi,*



*nihil actum ab initio, <nisi> ut hunc occideret.* ("I understand, later indeed than I could have wished because of Balbus' letters and conversation, but I do see clearly that everything is directed, and has been from the outset, toward destroying [Pompey].")<sup>18</sup> Cicero's suspicion of the man persisted. A month or so after Caesar's assassination, he writes to Atticus (*Att.* 14.21.2; SB 375):

*a<d> me autem, cum Cassi tabellarium dimissem, statim Balbus. o dei boni, quam facile perspiceres timere otium! et nosti virum, quam tectus....questus est etiam de sua invidia eaque omnis eius oratio fuit ut amare videretur Antonium. quid quaeris? nihil sinceri.*

But just after I had sent away Cassius' courier, Balbus paid a visit. Heavens above, how easily you could see his fear of peace! And you know how guarded the man is....He also complained of his own unpopularity, and the whole manner of his talk seemed to suggest an affection for Antony. In short, there was nothing genuine.

Mistrust and paranoia would seem to be an inevitable product of this calculating and often ruthless political environment. Indeed, at times the fictions demanded by social etiquette only served to aggravate the situation. Cicero, for example, expresses displeasure at the prospect of Atticus and his friend Sextus Peducaeus going to greet and offer congratulations to Caesar on his return to Rome in 49 B.C. The performance of this polite ritual (Cicero claims), especially when they do not support his cause, threatens to confound still further the distinction between courtesy and cynical ingratiation (*Att.* 8.9.2; SB 188): *'num igitur peccamus?' minime vos quidem; sed tamen signa conturbantur quibus voluntas a simulatione distingui posset.* ("Surely then we're not wrong in doing this?" Not at all, at least not in *your* case. Nevertheless, all this blurs the signs that might distinguish true disposition from pretense.")<sup>19</sup> Indeed, when writing in philosophical vein, Cicero asserts that embarking on a political career in Rome makes true friendship virtually impossible to achieve (*Amic.* 64). Running for office and brokering alliances almost inevitably led to a degree of pretense and double-dealing, frequently bringing the aristocrat into close contact with men skilled at sly flattery.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless it would be wrong to assume that the language of affiliative politeness, with its use of compliments and earnest exaggeration, was always cynically intended and cynically interpreted by Roman aristocrats, especially in contexts where the political stakes were not quite so high. As we have seen, a concern with face exerted a powerful influence on aristocratic behavior. We

risk overlooking a profound feature of human psychology if we assume that cool academic logic always governed their actions and reactions.<sup>21</sup>

Some of the complexities involved in these relationships are well illustrated by an episode that Cicero recounts to Atticus concerning Pompey's first appearance in the senate in 61 B.C. following his return from Asia (*Att.* 1.14.3; *SB* 14):

*Crassus, postea quam vidit illum excepisse laudem ex eo quod suspicarentur homines ei consulatum meum placere, surrexit ornatissimaeque de meo consulatu locutus est, ut ita diceret, se quod esset senator, quod civis, quod liber, quod viveret, mihi acceptum referre;...quid multa? totum hunc locum, quem ego varie meis orationibus...soleo pingere...valde graviter pertexuit.*

When Crassus saw that Pompey had gained some credit from people believing that he approved of my consulship, he got to his feet and spoke about my consulship in highly embellished terms, going so far as to say that it was to me he owed his existence as a senator, as a citizen, as a free man, and his very life....In short, he worked up really most impressively the whole theme which I regularly embroider in my own speeches one way and another.

Cicero's reaction to Crassus' encomium is revealing. He claims to have gained a special satisfaction from the man's generous remarks (*Att.* 1.14.4; *SB* 14): *hic dies me valde Crasso adiunxit, et tamen ab illo aperte tecte quicquid est datum libenter accepi.* ("This day has brought me very close to Crassus, although I was glad enough to take whatever tribute Pompey conferred directly or indirectly.") At the same time, his opening observations show that he is well aware of the sly opportunism in Crassus' tactics: the wily politician spoke in this way precisely in order to gain the senate's approval and to score a petty victory over Pompey. Indeed, according to Cicero, Crassus achieved these aims very effectively (*Att.* 1.14.3; *SB* 14):

*proxime Pompeium sedebam. intellexi hominem moveri, utrum Crassum inire eam gratiam quam ipse praetermisisset an esse tantas res nostras quae tam libenti senatu laudarentur, ab eo praesertim qui mihi laudem illam eo minus deberet quod meis omnibus litteris in Pompeiana laude perstrictus esset.*

I was sitting next to Pompey and I could see he was troubled, whether at Crassus gaining the credit which he himself had let slip,

or at realizing that my achievements are important enough to make the Senate so willing to hear them praised—praised too by a man who had all the less reason to offer me such glory, since he has been cast in a poor light by everything I have written in celebration of Pompey.

The important point is that Cicero is appreciative of Crassus' remarks *even though* he recognizes the manipulative intent behind them. (We may note, too, Cicero's wry view of the extravagantly rhetorical features of Crassus' speech; he by no means takes the oration at face value.) Certainly, the very public nature of Crassus' praise may help to explain this reaction. From one perspective, it does not matter *why* Crassus said what he said; the significant fact is that he has given Cicero's accomplishments a resounding encomium in front of the senate. In the aristocratic struggle for status and prestige, such things counted for a good deal. And yet we should not discount the possibility that Crassus' comments also affected Cicero on a more emotional level and brought about a real change in his disposition toward Crassus—if only a temporary one.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, Cicero himself employs similar techniques in his dealings with the provincials and *publicani* during his time as governor of Cilicia. In a letter to Atticus, for example, he refers to speeches that he made to the Laodiceans on his first visit to their city. His respectful words (he claims) have brought about a change in their disposition toward Roman rule (*Att.* 5.20.1; SB 113): *ibi morati biduum perillustres fuimus honorificisque verbis omnis iniurias revelimus superiores*. ("There I spent two days and was celebrated with great honors, and through respectful speeches I erased all earlier grievances.") Cicero here clearly believes in the power of honorific language to change an audience's disposition. Of course, we cannot tell how accurately he is judging the situation. Quite possibly the Laodiceans viewed these attempts at diplomacy rather more cynically. But it would be unfair to assume that Cicero is entirely the victim of self-delusion. The reaction of the provincials may in fact have been similar to that of Cicero himself to Crassus' speech in the senate: genuine appreciation of the positive attitude that Cicero's speeches convey, yet awareness too that he is motivated in part by self-interest.

Cicero adopts a similar approach with the province's *publicani*, men whose financial exploitation of the local population regularly made life difficult for governors.<sup>23</sup> He claims to Atticus that he has made great efforts to treat them with respect and courtesy, and by doing so has prevented them from causing too much trouble (*Att.* 6.1.16; SB 115): *de publicanis quid agam videris quaerere. habeo in deliciis, obsequor, verbis laudo, orno: efficio ne cui molesti sint*. ("You seem to want to know how I deal with the tax farmers. I treat them as my special favorites, I defer to them, I praise and honor them

with compliments—and make sure they harm nobody.”) As far as Cicero is concerned, this polite diplomacy makes a real difference (*Att.* 6.1.16; SB 115):

*itaque et Graeci solvunt tolerabili faenore et publicanis res est gratissima, si illa iam habent pleno modio, verborum honorem, invitationem crebram. quid plura? sunt omnes ita mihi familiares ut se quisque maxime putet.*

So the Greeks pay interest at a tolerable rate and the tax farmers too find the arrangement very welcome, since they now get all the verbal compliments and frequent invitations they want. In a word, they are all such friends to me that each man thinks himself most particularly so.

For the *publicani*, being treated respectfully (*verborum honor*) and receiving invitations to dine with the governor do indeed seem to matter. Such niceties helped both to increase their prestige in the eyes of the local inhabitants and to frame their relationship with Cicero as an essentially cooperative rather than antagonistic one. The diplomatic use of affiliative politeness again achieves tangible results. And in this case at least it is difficult to accuse Cicero of being too smug or complacent. He acknowledges that such changes in attitude, although real, are not necessarily enduring (*Att.* 6.1.16; SB 115): *sed tamen μηδὲν αὐτοῖς—scis reliqua*. (“All the same ‘in them let not...’—you know how it goes on.”)<sup>24</sup>

We should not then underestimate the ability of affiliative language to change an addressee’s disposition, even when those involved are seasoned veterans of the Roman political scene. Nevertheless, as the following examples show, a correspondent’s reaction to another’s use of politeness could be complex and depended a good deal on the political context and a subjective interpretation of the writer’s intent.

## Cicero and Mark Antony

Around the beginning of May 49 B.C., as the conflict between Caesar and Pompey escalated, Cicero came under increasing pressure to declare his political allegiance. Pompey’s supporters were now expected to leave Italy to join him in Greece, while Caesar was keen to gather whatever political allies in the senate he could. It is in these circumstances that Antony, one of Caesar’s leading advisers, writes Cicero the following letter (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A):

*nisi te valde amarem et multo quidem plus quam tu putas, non extimuissem rumorem qui de te prolatus est, cum praesertim falsum esse*

*existimarem. sed quia te nimio plus diligo, non possum dissimulare mihi famam quoque, quamvis sit falsa, falsam agnoscere magni esse.*

If I did not have great affection for you, much more indeed than you suppose, I would not have been so alarmed at a report which has been circulated about you, especially as I regarded it as false. But because I have a particularly high regard for you, I cannot conceal my concern to be assured of the falsity of the rumor, rumor and false though it be.<sup>25</sup>

Antony here shows himself to be fully conversant with aristocratic strategies of politeness. He neatly expresses his affection for Cicero by claiming that the rumor of the orator's planned departure from Italy has caused him considerable personal anxiety (*nisi te valde amarem... non extimuissem*). He is also sensitive to the fact that to believe disreputable rumors about Cicero would be to betray a lack of confidence in his loyalty and trustworthiness.<sup>26</sup> He therefore hurries on to assure the orator that, although he was concerned by the report, he did not believe it (*cum praesertim falsum esse existimarem*). In short, Antony goes to considerable lengths to strike a conciliatory and affiliative tone. Although the letter's prime aim is to put pressure on Cicero not to leave Italy, Antony politely pretends that it is motivated by his esteem for the orator (*quia te nimio plus diligo*). And he claims this esteem is so strongly felt that it has compelled him to ask a question that he might otherwise have kept to himself (*non possum dissimulare*). Indeed, he reiterates that he believes the rumor of Cicero's intended departure to be false (*quamvis sit falsa*).

He then continues with the observation that Cicero has compelling family reasons to remain in Italy (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A):

*trans mare <te iturum esse> credere non possum, cum tanti facias Dolabellam <et> Tulliam tuam, feminam lectissimam, tantique ab omnibus nobis fias; quibus mehercule dignitas amplitudoque tua paene carior est quam tibi ipsi.*

I cannot believe that you intend to go abroad, considering the high regard you hold for Dolabella and for your dear Tullia, a most excellent young woman, and the regard we all hold for you. On my word, your prestige and standing are almost dearer to us than to yourself.

To view these remarks as sinister and threatening (as Huzar does) almost certainly misreads Antony's tone and aim.<sup>27</sup> His concern here is to invoke the ties of family and friendship that Cicero has with the Caesarian party, something that he does through conventionalized aristocratese: note the

superlative expression (*feminam lectissimam*), the use of *carus*, the intensifier *mehercule*, and the references to Cicero's *dignitas* and *amplitudo*. Moreover Antony goes on to exploit the trope that it is his duty as a friend to concern himself with these matters (*Att.* 10.8A.1):<sup>28</sup>

*sed tamen non sum arbitratus esse amici non commoveri etiam improborum sermone, atque eo feci studiosius quod iudicabam dures partis mihi impositas esse ab offensione nostra, quae magis a ζηλοτυπία mea quam ab iniuria tua nata est.*

However, I did not think it right as a friend to ignore the talk even of malicious people, and I have acted all the more assiduously because I judged the duty laid on me all the harder on account of the awkwardness between us, which has arisen more from jealousy on my part than from any injury on yours.

The reference to *offensio nostra* alerts us to the tensions that existed between the two men. As Huzar notes, Antony and Cicero “had only faintly pretended to like each other since Cicero’s execution of the Catilinarians had included Antony’s stepfather.”<sup>29</sup> Certainly there seems to have been little attempt on either side in recent years to foster a warm relationship. Indeed, Antony’s use here of the phrase *multo quidem plus quam tu putas* may not just be intended as a kind of intensifying expression; it is designed in part to acknowledge the existing awkwardness between them. It is all the more significant then that Antony strikes a deferentially self-accusing and apologetic tone with his admission of ζηλοτυπία.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, he goes on to propose the polite fiction that the rumor of Cicero’s departure is merely the gossip of ill-wishers (*improborum sermone*).

This careful deployment of politeness strategies continues in the concluding paragraphs too (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A):

*sic enim volo te tibi persuadere, mihi neminem esse cariorum te excepto Caesare meo, meque illud una iudicare, Caesarem maxime in suis M. Ciceronem reponere.*

For I wish you to be convinced that no one is dearer to me than you, except my friend Caesar, and that at the same time I believe Caesar gives Marcus Cicero a special place among his friends.

Antony employs here the semiformulaic expression *volo te tibi persuadere*, the conventional adjective *carus*, and an explicit expression of esteem

(*maxime in suis...reponere*). Furthermore, the letter concludes with a formal request for Cicero to value Caesar's friendship over Pompey's, in which Antony combines the earnestly ingratiating form of address, *mi Cicero* (Att. 10.8A.2):

*qua re, mi Cicero, te rogo ut tibi omnia integra serves, eius fidem improbes qui tibi ut beneficium daret prius iniuriam fecit, contra ne profugas qui te, etsi non amabit, quod accidere non potest, tamen saluum amplissimumque esse cupiet.*

Therefore, my dear Cicero, I ask you to maintain your integrity in every respect and to reject the guarantees of a man who, to do you a service first did you an injury, and on the other hand not to shun one who, even if he ceases to have affection for you (which cannot happen), will still desire your well-being and standing.

In all, Antony manages to incorporate some seven explicit assertions of his (or Caesar's) great affection for Cicero in only twenty lines of the Loeb text.<sup>31</sup> The various other strategies of facework that he employs further demonstrate his awareness of the delicacy of the situation.

It is striking then that Cicero in a note to Atticus describes the letter as *odiosas* ("disagreeable").<sup>32</sup> Evidently, politeness can only achieve so much. Even Antony's polite fictions cannot mitigate sufficiently the awkwardness of the situation. In places his phrasing could have been improved perhaps. His expression *trans mare <te iturum esse> credere non possum*, for example, is probably intended as a continuation of the polite fiction that he has already initiated: just as he believes the current rumors to be false, so he cannot believe that Cicero would be planning to leave Tullia and (son-in-law) Dolabella. Nevertheless, its expression is a little stark and could be interpreted as a criticism of Cicero's judgment. Antony also includes a snide criticism of Pompey in the final lines, one that is offensive both because Pompey is Cicero's friend, and because it again calls into question Cicero's judgment as he contemplates joining Pompey's forces. But more awkward and embarrassing for Cicero is the fact that he has been reminded of his obligations to the Caesarian side just as he was hoping to ignore them. He has in effect been caught red-handed as he makes plans to leave Italy. We may wonder also to what extent Cicero's already strained relationship with Antony influences his reaction to the letter. Their previous animosity may well render Antony's attempts at graciousness all the more grating. In some circumstances, the use of polite fictions was perhaps actually counterproductive.

Cicero seems to have responded with a letter containing a number of bland assurances and polite but noncommittal remarks (*Att.* 10.10.1; SB 201):

*misi ad te epistulam Antoni. ei cum ego t̄saepissimet̄ scripsissem nihil me contra Caesaris rationes cogitare, meminisse me generi mei, meminisse amicitiae, potuisse, si aliter sentirem, esse cum Pompeio, me autem, quia cum lictoribus invitus cursarem, abesse velle nec id ipsum certum etiam nunc habere....*

I sent you Antony's letter. I wrote to him to the effect that I had no intention of acting against Caesar's interests, that I bore my son-in-law in mind and also the claims of friendship, that if I had felt otherwise I might have been with Pompey now, but that since I was finding it awkward to travel around with my lictors I wished to stay at a distance, though even that I had still not definitely decided....

Cicero's reply clearly avoided giving the commitment that Antony's letter sought to elicit. No doubt it was phrased with appropriate courtesy: Cicero seems to have professed his concern for Dolabella as well as for his friendship with Caesar. And he probably also signaled his intent to ask Caesar for permission to stay in Italy but keep away from Rome (see Antony's reply discussed below). Cicero could thus claim perhaps that he was merely responding in kind to the various polite fictions that Antony had himself initiated. But there is a significant difference. Antony's fictions, however transparent, seem designed primarily to ease the awkwardness of the situation and to accord Cicero a measure of respect. Cicero's reply is merely evasive. His fictions are deceptive in intent rather than oriented toward Antony's face. He makes the claim, for example, that the encumbering presence of his lictors prevents him from joining either Pompey or Caesar. Certainly these lictors would have been a real impediment to his movements;<sup>33</sup> but in this context the claim looks suspiciously like a convenient excuse, a fiction invoked solely to allow him to wriggle out of giving Antony and Caesar the commitment they want.<sup>34</sup> Cicero exploits the gentlemanly restraint and refinement of Antony's letter for his own shuffling purposes.

It is no surprise then that Antony adopts a rather different tone in his reply. Cicero's prevarication prompts him to dispense with polite pleasantries and assume instead a more detached manner (*Att.* 10.10.2; SB 201):

*tu<or>um consilium t̄quia t̄ verum est. nam qui se medium esse vult, in patria manet; qui proficiscitur, aliquid de altera utra parte iudicare*



*videtur. sed ego is non sum qui statuere debeam iure quis proficiscatur necne; partis mihi Caesar has imposuit ne quem omnino discedere ex Italia paterer. qua re parvi refert me probare cogitationem tuam, si nihil tamen tibi remittere possum. ad Caesarem mittas censeo et ab eo hoc petas. non dubito quin impetraturus sis, cum praesertim te amicitiae vestrae rationem habiturum esse pollicearis.*

Your friends' advice is very sound. For the man who wishes to remain neutral stays in his country; the man who leaves gives the impression that he is passing judgment on one side or the other. However it is not my responsibility to decide who has the right to leave and who does not. Caesar has entrusted me the duty of ensuring no one at all goes out of Italy. Therefore it matters little that I should approve your intention since even so I cannot grant you any concession. I suggest you send to Caesar and make your request of him. I do not doubt that you will get what you ask, especially as you promise to take into consideration the friendship between you.

Cicero remarks to Atticus on the letter's brevity (*Att.* 10.10.3; SB 201): *habes σκυτάλην Λακωνικήν*. ("There's a Laconian dispatch for you!") And he seems to resent its assured and assertive manner (*Att.* 10.10.1): *vide quam ad haec παραινέτικῶς*. ("See how perspicaciously he replies on these matters.")<sup>35</sup> But Antony does in fact employ a degree of facework here. By referring to a hypothetical individual leaving the country, even though the context ensures that his remark must be understood as referring to Cicero's own contemplated actions, he mitigates the element of confrontation, at least to some extent. Antony also suggests reassuringly that Caesar will be well disposed toward the orator (*non dubito quin impetraturus sis*). Nevertheless, the change in style is conspicuous. Antony dispenses entirely with the conventional strategies of affiliative politeness that featured so prominently in his first letter. Moreover, he abruptly disengages himself from any sense of personal obligation to Cicero as regards future events: Caesar is the one who actually makes the decisions; Antony merely carries them out. He thus jettisons the use of polite fictions and allows the unpleasant realities of the situation to emerge more starkly.

This incident illustrates well both the kinds of tension that the conventional language of politeness set out to ease, and also some of the difficulties in its application. It could not mitigate the awkwardness of each and every situation; and depending on the immediate context and the past relations of those involved, its fictions might not always be appreciated, especially if the suspicion arose that they were being exploited for individual advantage rather than mutual benefit. Indeed, once initiated, polite fictions could multiply

disconcertingly. Antony's frustration with Cicero's reply is thus quite understandable. From his perspective, he has tried to broach an awkward issue in a diplomatic way. In turn he has received an annoying confection of noncommittal platitudes. Nevertheless, his abrupt abandonment in the second letter of his earlier courteous manner also highlights the deliberate calculation that could lie behind the use of such civility. It becomes just one more persuasive strategy in the aristocrat's arsenal of manipulative techniques. The repeated use of conventional politeness in this fashion can only have heightened the sense of suspicion and mistrust that prevailed in certain encounters.

We find a similar uneasiness in the correspondence between Antony and Cicero some five years later. A month or so after the assassination of Julius Caesar, Antony (who was consul at the time) wrote to Cicero to ask for approval of his plan to recall Sextus Cloelius from exile (*Att.* 14.13A; SB 367A). Given that Cloelius had been a close associate of Cicero's enemy Publius Clodius, the request was not likely to please the orator.<sup>36</sup> Antony thus adopts a highly deferential manner in his letter, beginning with a careful explanation of why he has not been able to discuss the subject face-to-face with Cicero (*Att.* 14.13A.1): *occupationibus est factum meis et subita tua profectio ne tecum coram de hac re agerem. quam ob causam vereor ne absentia mea levior sit apud te.* ("Pressure of business on my side and your sudden departure have prevented me from taking this matter up with you in person. For this reason I am afraid that my absence may carry less weight with you.")<sup>37</sup> The apologetic element in these remarks helps to cast the coming interaction as non-confrontational (note especially the use of *vereor*). This studied formality continues with an appeal to Cicero's generous nature (*Att.* 14.13A.1): *quod si bonitas tua responderit iudicio meo quod semper habui de te, gaudebo.* ("But if your good character proves to correspond with the opinion I have always held of you, I shall be delighted.")

Antony then goes on to address the main business at hand. He had already received from Caesar before the assassination (he claims) approval for Cloelius' recall. Nevertheless he will not go through with his plan if Cicero objects (*Att.* 14.13A.2):

*erat mihi in animo etiam tum sic uti beneficio eius si tu concessisses. quo magis laboro ut tua voluntate id per me facere nunc <possim>. quod si duriorem te eius miserae et adflictae fortunae praebes, non contendam ego adversus te, quamquam videor debere tueri commentarium Caesaris.*

I had intended even then to take advantage of [Caesar's] favor only if you gave your consent. So I am all the more anxious to gain your agreement to my doing it through my own agency now. If however you show yourself unsympathetic toward his sad and wretched

situation, I shall not persist in opposition to your wishes, although I feel I have a duty to uphold Caesar's memorandum.

Antony thus goes out of his way to show respect for Cicero's wishes, emphasizing that his intended action is not to be construed as an arbitrary, high-handed use of his authority. He then proceeds in sections two and three to present various arguments to try to persuade Cicero to agree with his proposal. Although these arguments are clearly manipulative in intent, Antony maintains overall his initial deferential manner. He allows himself one remark that could perhaps be construed as threatening, as he observes that Cicero surely does not desire an old age full of anxieties (*senectutem... sollicitam*, section 3), one that might eventuate if he maintains a feud with P. Clodius' son. But the outer façade of politeness is scrupulously maintained, as Antony insists that there is no question of Cicero being in danger (*tuam fortunam, Cicero, ab omni periculo abesse certum habeo*). Indeed, in his final remarks Antony repeats his desire to avoid any direct challenge to Cicero's prestige (*Att. 14.13A.3; SB 367A*):

*postremo meo iure te hoc beneficium rogo; nihil enim non tua causa feci. quod si non impetro, per me Cloelio daturus non sum, ut intellegas quanti apud me auctoritas tua sit atque eo te placabiliorem praebeas.*

Finally I have some right to ask this favor of you, for I have done all I could on your behalf. But if I fail to obtain it, I shall not make the concession to Cloelius on my own, so that you may see from this how much your personal influence matters to me, and show yourself the more placable on that account.

Antony thus goes to considerable lengths to show Cicero due respect in a difficult and delicate situation (as he does in *Att. 10.8A* just discussed). And in fact Cicero in his comments to Atticus grudgingly acknowledges the letter's punctilious deference (*Att. 14.13.6; SB 367*): *M. Antonius ad me scripsit de restitutione Sex. Cloeli; quam honorifice, quod ad me attinet, ex ipsius litteris cognoscas (misi enim tibi exemplum)*. ("Mark Antony has written to me on the recall of Sex. Cloelius—in how respectful a style so far as concerns me personally you will see from his own letter, of which I enclose a copy.") And yet, as far as Cicero is concerned, this facework cannot disguise or compensate for the outrageous nature of what is being requested (*Att. 14.13.6*): *quam dissolute, quam turpiter quamque ita perniciose ut non numquam Caesar desiderandus esse videatur, facile existimabis*. ("How unscrupulously, how disgracefully and how malevolently he writes, you will readily appreciate, so

that sometimes one is tempted to wish Caesar back.”) Much of his unease no doubt arises from Antony’s use of the dead Caesar’s memoranda to justify his actions. Only a month or so after the dictator’s assassination, it was becoming clear that Antony intended to exploit quite cynically his access to Caesar’s papers.<sup>38</sup>

From a wider perspective, however, our view of Antony’s letter depends a good deal on how we view his claim that he will not go through with his plan to recall Cloelius if Cicero disapproves. Cicero himself regards it as a despicable piece of hypocrisy, a dishonest pretense that cannot be successfully challenged (*Att.* 14.13.6; SB 367): *ego autem Antonio facillimum me prae-bui. etenim ille, quoniam semel induxit animum sibi licere quod vellet, fecisset nihilo minus me invito.* (“As for me, I have shown myself all compliance to Antony. After all, having once made up his mind that he had a right to do what he pleased, he would have done it just the same if I had opposed.”) If this is the case, Antony does indeed seem open to the charge of exploiting this polite fiction quite calculatingly for his own gain. He asserts *twice* in his letter that he will defer to Cicero’s wishes, when in fact he has no intention of doing so.

And yet this may not be the whole story. Antony may well have expected Cicero to understand that his offer was merely a polite gesture—part of a courteous routine in which Antony was to graciously assert his willingness to defer, and Cicero was in turn to generously decline. Such a routine would benefit both parties. Antony’s explicit, on-record display of deference would help to save Cicero’s face in the affair. To anyone who regarded the recall as an insult, Cicero could quite plausibly reply that he had known about Antony’s plans all along and could have stopped them if he wished. Antony for his part manages to present himself as a respectful and deferential consul.

Clearly, however, this was a script that Cicero resented. Antony’s show of respect could not make up for the questionable nature of his designs and their justification. Nevertheless, it was the script that Cicero eventually played out. In the end he forced himself to compose a reply in which he acceded to Antony’s request with elaborate courtesy and forbearance (*Att.* 14.13B.1; SB 367B):

*quod mecum per litteras agis unam ob causam mallet coram egisses; non enim solum ex oratione, sed etiam ex vultu et oculis et fronte, ut aiunt, meum erga te amorem perspicere potuisses. nam cum te semper amavi, primum tuo studio, post etiam beneficio provocatus, tum his temporibus res publica te mihi ita commendavit ut cariorem habeam neminem. litterae vero tuae cum amantissime tum honorificentissime scriptae sic me adfecerunt ut non dare tibi beneficium viderer sed*

*accipere a te ita petente ut inimicum meum, necessarium tuum, me invito servare nolles, cum id nullo negotio facere posses.*

As for your raising this matter with me by letter, there is only one reason why I would have preferred you to have raised it in person: for then you would have been able to discern my affection for you, not just from my words but also from my eyes and expression, written, as the saying goes, all over my face. For I have always felt affection for you, prompted in the first instance by your devotion to me and later by your actual services. Moreover at the present time the Republic has commended you to my regard, so much so that I consider no one dearer to me. And now your affectionate and respectful letter has made me feel that I am not conferring a favor on you but receiving one at your hands, when you frame your request in such a way, stating that you do not wish to rescue my enemy and your friend against my will, although you would have no difficulty in doing so.

To Antony's opening four lines of careful deference, Cicero replies with some eleven lines of fulsome affection and regard. His language is essentially conventional: note the references to *amor* and *studium*, his use of *carus*, and the emphatic superlatives (*amantissime*, *honorificentissime*). But this conventionalized vocabulary is combined with a number of strained conceits. The letter begins neatly enough perhaps with an assurance that Cicero has not taken offense at the epistolary nature of their communication, and with an attempt to contrive a compliment from Antony's opening comment. But this courtesy becomes a little labored as Cicero develops the point via the contrast *non solum...sed etiam* and the emphatic phrase *ex vultu et oculis et fronte*. This earnest mode of expression is followed a few lines later by the conceit that Antony's request, far from placing him under an obligation to Cicero, performs in fact a *beneficium* on Cicero's behalf, and thus places the orator in Antony's debt. The claim is a strained one and strikes a contrived, hollow note. Indeed, this expansive courtesy continues further as Cicero formally accedes to Antony's request (*Att.* 14.13B.3; SB 367B):

*ego vero tibi istuc, mi Antoni, remitto atque ita ut me a te, cum his verbis scripseris, liberalissime atque honorificentissime tractatum existimem, idque cum totum, quoquo modo se res haberet, tibi dandum putarem, tum do etiam humanitati et naturae meae.*

Yes, my dear Antony, I yield to your wishes in this matter, and in such a way as to think that when you write in such terms I am treated most

generously and respectfully. In any circumstances I should feel bound to make this concession to you unreservedly; and I am also making it to my natural humanity.

Cicero's use here of *mi Antoni* together with the superlatives *liberalissime* and *honorificentissime* is not unusual in itself; but when added to the other conceits that we have identified, it contributes yet further to the sense of forced, heavy-handed politeness. Cicero also engages in a kind of competitive display of deference: Antony on the one hand had offered to defer to Cicero's wishes; Cicero now adopts a reciprocally gracious and generous manner (*id. . . totum quoquo modo se res haberet, tibi dandum putarem*).

Cicero, however, does not let Antony have everything his way. He slyly takes the opportunity to score some political points of his own. If he cannot prevent Cloelius' recall, he will at least make sure that he derives some kind of advantage from it (*Att. 14.13B.3; SB 367B*): *nihil enim umquam non modo acerbum in me fuit sed ne paulo quidem tristius aut severius quam necessitas rei publicae postulavit*. ("There has never been in my character any trace of harshness, let alone bitterness or severity, except to the degree that the needs of the republic have demanded it.") Almost twenty years on, Cicero cannot resist obliquely justifying his actions against the Catilinarian conspirators—a riposte prompted perhaps by Cloelius' support of the attempts made by Clodius in the previous decade to depict Cicero as an arbitrary, power-crazed tyrant.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, as noted earlier, Antony's own step-father had been executed in the wake of the conspiracy.<sup>40</sup>

Cicero then goes on to construct some polite fictions of his own. He presents himself as a man utterly free from malice, who has never felt any enmity toward Cloelius (*Att. 14.13B.3; SB 367B*): *accedit ut ne in ipsum quidem Cloelium meum insigne odium fuerit umquam*. ("Let me add that toward Cloelius personally I have never felt any special hostility.") Indeed, he asserts (even more contentiously) that his feud with Publius Clodius would no longer be active, were Clodius still alive (*Att. 14.13B.4*): *si viveret, mihi cum illo nulla contentio iam maneret*. ("If he were alive today there would no longer be any strife between us.") Cicero thus makes the most of a situation where extravagant polite fictions are being spun and, perforce, mutually upheld. If Antony wants Cicero's agreement to Cloelius' recall, then he will also have to accept these claims regarding the orator's generous character.

Cicero concludes with an assertion of goodwill toward Antony no less expansive in tone than his remarks elsewhere in the letter (*Att. 14.13B.5*): *illud extremum: ego quae te velle quaeque ad te pertinere arbitrabor semper sine ulla dubitatione summo studio faciam. hoc velim tibi penitus persuadeas*.

("One thing in conclusion. I shall always, without hesitation and with the greatest devotion, do anything that I think to accord with your wishes and interests. I would like you to be thoroughly convinced of this.") The accumulation of intensifiers here—*semper, sine ulla dubitatione, summo, penitus*—continues the fulsome and emphatic tone.

Cicero thus performs his allotted role in this polite exchange, but does so in a manner that is often labored and contrived. Shackleton Bailey finds an explanation for this in the orator's intellectual limitations: "Like most people who talk or write better than they think, the less genuine the note the more Cicero was apt to force it."<sup>41</sup> But there may well be more deliberation behind the letter and its tone than Shackleton Bailey admits. As we have seen, Cicero was incensed by Antony's request and frustrated by the position in which its respectful politeness placed him. His reply then is perhaps better viewed as an arch parody of the aristocratic rituals that Antony has initiated, one written mutteringly and through gritted teeth. His exaggeratedly fulsome language teeters awkwardly on the edge of sarcasm.

Antony, however, was evidently prepared to uphold these outward forms of courtesy still further. On May 8, 44 B.C., Cicero remarks to Atticus (*Att.* 14.19.2; *SB* 372): *M. Antonius ad me tantum de Cloelio rescripsit, meam lenitatem et clementiam et sibi esse gratam et mihi voluptati magnae fore.* ("Mark Antony has replied to me about Cloelius, simply stating that he is grateful for my lenience and clemency and that this will turn out to be a source of great pleasure to me.") This brief (*tantum*) note of thanks seems to have combined conventional phrasing (note *gratam* and *voluptati magnae fore*) with polite compliments to Cicero on his *clementia*. Antony thus brings the matter to a conclusion that, for him at least, must have proved very satisfactory. He has managed to obtain approval for Cloelius' recall without any public confrontation or rupture, and his letters have upheld all the requirements of courtesy and respect. Only Cicero's remarks to Atticus allow us to perceive the resentment that the affair generated.

The episode has an interesting coda. Several months later in September 44 B.C., as the tensions between the two men developed into outright confrontation, Antony read out in the senate passages from Cicero's reply. Its glib protestations of affection were now brandished as evidence for the orator's fickleness and hypocrisy.<sup>42</sup> Stripped from their original context, these gushing remarks must have proved all too embarrassing indeed. Polite fictions do not survive well when removed from the social pressures that produce them.<sup>43</sup>

Several significant points emerge from these exchanges between Cicero and Antony. First, we see Antony's close familiarity with the language of politeness and his willingness to exploit it in awkward situations. This will

be an important point to bear in mind in chapter 5 when we examine his exchanges later in 44 B.C. with Brutus and Cassius. Although he readily adopts with Cicero a stance of diplomatic deference, his manner when dealing with the two assassins is quite different. Second, we see that Cicero's reactions to Antony's letters are shaped as much by contextual factors as by their language. Conventional strategies of politeness can create only the *potential* for constructive, cooperative interaction. Previous experiences with the correspondent might make an aristocrat unwilling to exploit this potential. Over the years, Cicero presumably learned to judge how far to trust the professions of friendship that various individuals made. The particular pressures of the moment also made a difference. As we have seen, Antony's first letter to Cicero in 49 B.C. demonstrates in fact a creditable sense of diplomacy. It was an awkward letter to write and he makes considerable effort to save Cicero's face. The unpleasantness of the situation as a whole, however, ensures that these niceties go unappreciated.

Finally, these exchanges help us to distinguish a little more precisely between welcome displays of politeness and the more ambiguous use of *blanditiae*. Their language is often similar and both often involve fictions; the difference lies largely in who benefits. If these fictions help to save the addressee's face and to promote mutually beneficial social harmony, they are likely to be viewed favorably. But if the writer seems to be angling for some advantage of his own, these civilities take on a rather more suspect character. Nevertheless, the modern scholar is still faced with difficulties. In the case of the letters exchanged between Cicero and Antony, we can offer informed views regarding the intentions and results of their polite language only because we know something about their context. When we turn to letters from other individuals, it is far less easy to judge whether such language aims at cynical manipulation, or is simply the conventional language of respect and admiration. A good example of this interpretative problem is provided by *Fam.* 12.13 (SB 419), a letter written to Cicero by Cassius Parmensis.

## Cicero and Cassius Parmensis

In June 43 B.C. Cassius Parmensis—a senator, poet and (possibly) assassin of Caesar—wrote to Cicero in his official capacity as proquaestor in command of a small fleet of ships off the coast of Asia.<sup>44</sup> The letter (*Fam.* 12.13) divides into two distinct parts. The second part (sections 3 to 5) presents an unadorned military report of his recent actions in the campaign against Dolabella around Asia and Cyprus. The first part (sections 1 and 2), by



contrast, presents a fulsome eulogy of Cicero's contribution to the recent senatorial successes at Mutina (*Fam.* 12.13.1; SB 419):

*cum rei publicae vel salute vel victoria gaudemus tum instauratione tuarum laudum, quod maximus consularis maximum consulem te ipse vicisti, et laetamur et mirari satis non possumus. fatale nescio quid tuae virtuti datum, id quod saepe iam experti sumus. est enim tua toga omnium armis felicior; quae nunc quoque nobis paene victam rem publicam ex manibus hostium eripuit ac reddidit. nunc ergo vivemus liberi, nunc te, omnium maxime civis et mihi carissime, id quod maximis rei publicae tenebris comperisti, nunc te habebimus testem nostri et in te et in coniunctissimam tibi rem publicam amoris, et, quae saepe pollicitus es te et taciturnum dum serviremus et dicturum de me tum cum mihi profutura essent, nunc illa non ego quidem dici tanto opere desiderabo quam sentiri a te ipso.*

I am rejoicing not only at the salvation and victory of the Republic, but at the renewal of your renown. You have outdone even yourself; Rome's greatest Consular has surpassed her greatest Consul, and my happiness and admiration know no bounds. A mysterious blessing of providence has been granted to your valor, as we have often found before now. For your toga enjoys greater fortune than the arms of any other man, and once again it has snatched our almost vanquished republic from the hands of her enemies and restored her to us. So now we shall live as free men. I shall now have your testimony—you, the greatest citizen of all and the dearest to me (as you came to know in our country's darkest hours)—your testimony to my affection for yourself and for the commonwealth, with which you are identified. And those words concerning me which you often promised not to say while our bondage continued, but to pronounce when they should be to my benefit, these I now do not so much desire to have spoken aloud as to know that you feel them in your heart.

The style of these opening sentences is remarkable.<sup>45</sup> In some respects the language owes much to the standard conventions of aristocratese. We may note, for example, Cassius' use of the verbs *gaudeo* and *laetor* to convey his pleasure in Cicero's achievements, as well as the direct compliments deploying superlative expressions (e.g., *maximus*, *maximum*, *carissime*). But other aspects are more unusual. The phrase *instauratione tuarum laudum* employs a metaphorical extension of the word *instauratione* that is unparalleled in our extant Republican writings.<sup>46</sup> Certainly the metaphor endows Cassius' remark

with a degree of solemnity and impressiveness; but its conceit goes beyond what we normally find in these polite rituals. The phrase *maximus consularis maximum consulem te ipse vicisti* is similarly self-conscious with its use of paradox and jingling expression.<sup>47</sup> The compliment is even more strained if we view these uses of *maximus* as true superlatives ("greatest"). Cicero could perhaps at this time be described as the "greatest" living consular (*maximus consularis*) without too much exaggeration; but to refer to him as *maximus consul* forces the compliment in a rather obvious way. We may note, too, the overstatement of *mirari satis non possumus* and the extravagant claim that Cicero's courage is aided by some kind of supernatural power (*fatale nescio quid*). Cassius also ingratiatingly asserts that Cicero's efforts in the senate (referred to metaphorically as *tua toga*) have proved more successful than the use of force by everyone else (*omnium armis felicior*). This claim is all the more calculating in that it evidently makes a nod to Cicero's own celebration of his achievements in his poem *De Consulatu Suo*.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, although Cassius' description of Cicero as *mihi carissime* falls squarely in line with the conventional practices of his contemporaries, the sentence in which this phrase occurs is convoluted and crammed with stylistic artifice. Note in particular the hyperbaton of *nostri... amoris* and the three antitheses packed into the final clauses (the contrasts between *te et taciturnum* and *dicturum de me*, between *dum serviremus* and *cum mihi profutura essent*, and between *dici* and *sentiri*). One or two of these linguistic flourishes would have been elegant enough. But taken together they create a contrived and fulsome manner of expression that is difficult to parallel in the extant correspondence.

This contrived striving for effect is thrown into even greater relief when Cassius switches abruptly in section three to the role of factual military reporter and presents in much plainer style a narration of the military events in which he has been involved as commander (*Fam.* 12.13.3; SB 419):

*nos ex ora maritima Asiae provinciae et ex insulis quas potuimus navis deduximus, dilectum remigum magna contumacia civitatum tamen satis celeriter habuimus, secuti sumus classem Dolabellae, cui L. Figulus praeerat. qui spem saepe transitionis praebendo neque umquam non decedendo novissime Corycum se contulit et clauso portu se tenere coepit.*

We launched all available ships from the coast of the province of Asia and the islands, and held a levy of rowers quickly enough despite the stubborn resistance of the communes there. We went in pursuit of Dolabella's fleet, which was under the command of L. Figulus. By

often holding out hopes that he might change sides, while drawing away all the time he finally took himself to Corycus, where he blocked the harbor and shut himself inside.

The honorific language of aristocratic courtesy is replaced here by the unadorned style of the *commentarium* or official military report.<sup>49</sup> The ease with which Cassius moves between the two suggests that both were well established and conventional features of upper class correspondence. To this extent, Cassius is simply performing the various epistolary routines expected of him in his role as senatorial commander. The existence of these routines points again to the high degree of formality that prevailed in much aristocratic interaction.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, the style of Cassius' opening paragraphs remains unusual. It is strained and overwrought, and the content overtly flattering. But did Cicero regard it as obsequious and hypocritical or simply as appropriately effusive? Without detailed information about his relationship with Cassius, it is difficult to tell. If he was acquainted with Cassius' poetic pretensions, he may perhaps have attributed the letter's contrived style to this literary impulse. It is worth noting, too, that Cassius includes in his opening paragraphs two appeals to Cicero for help in the advancement of his political career.<sup>51</sup> As Shackleton Bailey notes, these remarks give the impression that Cassius was still a relative newcomer on the political scene.<sup>52</sup> But whether Cicero viewed this display of deference as a welcome form of *observantia* remains impossible to judge. Much depends on how consistently it corresponded to Cicero's previous dealings with the man.

At the same time, Cassius' elaborate praise of Cicero probably served a vital political purpose in the fraught context of its time. During these months of uncertainty, both Cicero and the senate were keen to receive pledges of support from the commanders stationed throughout the various provinces. Certainly such pledges were not always reliable or disinterested, as Munatius Plancus observes in a letter addressed to the senate, written in March 43 (*Fam.* 10.8.2; SB 371): *non me praeteribat in tanta sollicitudine hominum et tam perturbato statu civitatis fructuosissimam esse professionem bonae voluntatis magnosque honores ex ea re compluris consecutos videbam*. ("It did not escape my notice that at such a time of grave public anxiety and national upheaval the profession of loyal sentiments is highly rewarding, and I saw that a number of persons had gained great honors by this means.") But to politicians such as Cicero trying to cobble together ad hoc alliances to counter hostile armed forces, unambiguous assertions of support such as these provided crucial political capital.<sup>53</sup> Cicero was savvy enough to know that they had only a temporary currency; but this might be all that was needed

for the exigencies of the moment. Cassius too for his part may have been well aware that any pledge of support (and request for patronage) had to be especially emphatic, in order to make clear that it was not merely a piece of luke-warm extemporizing. Our final example—a letter from Lepidus to Cicero written around the same time—illustrates the point well.

## Cicero and Lepidus

In 43 B.C. M. Aemilius Lepidus was governor of Nearer Spain and Narbonese Gaul and hence an important powerbroker in the senate's brewing conflict with Antony.<sup>54</sup> At the start of the year Cicero had successfully proposed that the senate award him special honors in recognition of his skillful negotiations with the potentially dangerous forces of Sextus Pompey in Spain.<sup>55</sup> By doing so, Cicero hoped to entice Lepidus to work within the framework of the senate's policy toward Antony rather than outside it. Cicero's allies, however, disapproved of this approach (*ad Brut.* 1.15.3; SB 23), and Cicero himself soon realized that Lepidus intended to pursue his own political course. On March 20, the senate received letters from both Lepidus and Munatius Plancus (governor of Transalpine Gaul), proposing that peace negotiations be undertaken with Antony. Cicero vigorously attacked these proposals and wrote a sharp letter to express his disappointment with Lepidus' position.<sup>56</sup>

Our next extant communication between the two men dates to around May 19. Lepidus, like Cassius Parmensis, sends Cicero an account in plain unadorned style of his recent military operations (*Fam.* 10.34; SB 396). Unlike Cassius, however, he forgoes any attempt to cultivate friendly contacts through the use of honorific language. Possibly pressure of business at Lepidus' military camp forced him to be brief. A few days later, however, he sends Cicero another letter in which he exploits conventionalized expressions of politeness at great length (*Fam.* 10.34A.1; SB 400):

*etsi omni tempore summa studia officii mutuo inter nos certatim constiterunt pro nostra inter nos familiaritate et proinde diligenter ab utroque conservata sunt, tamen non dubito in tanto et tam repentino motu rei publicae quin non nulla de me falsis rumoribus a meis obtrectatoribus me indigna ad te delata sint, quae tuum animum magno opere moverent pro tuo amore in rem publicam. ea te moderate accepisse neque temere credendum iudicasse a meis procuratoribus certior sum factus. quae mihi, ut debent, gratissima sunt. memini enim et illa superiora quae abs tua voluntate profecta sunt ad meam dignitatem augendam et ornandam, quae perpetuo animo meo fixa manebunt.*

Although at all times a very great eagerness to do one another service has been a source of mutual rivalry, on behalf of the friendship between us, and both of us have been careful to maintain our practice accordingly, nevertheless I have no doubt that in so great and unexpected an upheaval in the republic my detractors have brought you false and unworthy reports concerning me, calculated to give your patriotic heart considerable disquiet. My agents have informed me that you have received these rumors in a calm manner and judged that they should not be hastily believed. For that I am deeply and duly grateful. I also remember your earlier efforts deriving from your goodwill to promote and enhance my prestige: they will ever remain firmly rooted in my mind.

Lepidus here displays his own facility with the conventions of aristocratic politeness. He invokes their shared *studia officii* and *familiaritas*, obligations that have been scrupulously upheld (he claims) on both sides; he expresses his appreciation of Cicero's understanding attitude (*quae mihi... gratissima sunt*); he acknowledges the orator's efforts to promote his prestige (*ad meam dignitatem augendam et ornandam*); and he offers an assurance that he will remember these services in times to come (although he stops short of a formal pledge). He also exhibits the familiar tendency toward earnest overstatement through the use of emphatic adjectives, adverbs and superlatives (see, e.g., *omni, summa, gratissima, perpetuo*). Moreover, Lepidus' fluency with this language is evident in the request for Cicero's support that follows. He constructs from more or less standard phrases an elegantly coordinated sentence of some forty-five words (*Fam.* 10.34A.2; SB 400):

*abs te, mi Cicero, magno opere peto, si meam vitam, studium, diligentiam, fidem superioribus temporibus in re publica administranda quae Lepido digna sunt perspecta habes, ut paria aut eo ampliora reliquo tempore exspectes et proinde tua auctoritate me tuendum existimes quo tibi plura tuo merito debeo.*

My dear Cicero, if in time past my life and devotion, my diligence and good faith in the conduct of public affairs, have to your knowledge been worthy of a Lepidus, I earnestly request you to expect equal or greater things in time to come, and to consider me deserving of the protection of your public influence in proportion as your kindness places me further and further in your debt.

Cicero's recent experiences with Lepidus must have influenced his reaction to these remarks. As his letter to Lepidus in March shows, he was well

aware that the man had not decisively rejected Antony's overtures. Indeed, in a letter to M. Brutus (*ad Brut.* 2.2.1; SB 3) written on April 11, 43 B.C., he sharply criticizes Lepidus' *levitatem et inconstantiam* ("irresponsibility and fickleness"). Decimus Brutus shared this view, urging Cicero a couple of weeks later to be wary of the man (*Fam.* 11.9.2; SB 380): *mihi persuasissimum est Lepidum recte facturum numquam*. ("I am firmly convinced that Lepidus will never behave rightly.") And toward the beginning of May, he informed Cicero that Antony was still in contact with Lepidus (*Fam.* 11.10.4; SB 385).

The best that Lepidus can manage in his defense is the claim that all negative reports about his intentions are malicious and deceptive rumors, a claim that was itself something of a diplomatic cliché.<sup>57</sup> Overall the letter provides perhaps one of our clearest examples of conventional courtesy being employed quite cynically in the course of political negotiations. Lepidus was certainly no fool when it came to finessing deals with ambitious rivals;<sup>58</sup> but we must wonder whether the polite fictions that he asks Cicero to uphold in this particular case aim too obviously at his own advantage, and conflict too clearly with his previous actions.

## Concluding Remarks

It is easy to form a picture of Roman politicians as a disturbingly dysfunctional bunch, calculatingly duplicitous in their dealings with each other and driven relentlessly by an egomaniacal will to power. In this chapter alone, we have suspected Lepidus of writing deceitfully to Cicero, Antony of cunningly deploying politeness in pursuit of his political ends, and men such as Asinius Pollio and Cassius Parmensis striking carefully manufactured poses in their military reports to Cicero. Such intrigue is an undeniable facet of the correspondence. Indeed, this is precisely what makes many of these epistolary encounters so compelling. But it is important to appreciate the conventionalized framework of politeness that these manipulative gambits exploited. There is a discernible continuity between the polite fictions of everyday aristocratic business and the calculated maneuvers of high politics. The effusive language of social cultivation had much in common with the affiliative politeness used by Cicero in his day-to-day dealings with influential friends and acquaintances; and this language in turn found its way into the high-level negotiations of consulars and generals. The difference in the latter case was what lay at stake. As we shall explore further in chapter 5, at moments of political crisis the consequences of such polite deceptions could be deadly.

It would be mistaken, however, to conclude that all aristocratese was intrinsically devious. What generated this kind of politeness was the Roman

aristocrat's preoccupation with rank and *dignitas*. This fundamental concern ensured that fulsome and explicit expressions of esteem would always have a role to play in these circles. The ability of such language to defuse tensions and forge cooperative relationships between powerful men made it a valuable part of the patron's daily dealings at Rome. Its negative form—hypocritical flattery and deceptive fictions—was to some extent simply the unfortunate side-effect of an otherwise useful social practice. The shrewd grandee soon learned to judge an acquaintance's correspondence not just on its language, but also according to a more general assessment of the man's character, ambitions and previous actions. Unfortunately, the modern reader does not always have access to the same information.

# 3

## Redressive Politeness

### *Requests, Refusals, and Advice*

In this chapter, I examine various types of “redressive” politeness, a term that I use to refer to linguistic strategies that attempt to compensate for the threat to face involved in certain types of social interaction. In the Ciceronian correspondence, three types of situation seem to have been particularly face-threatening for Roman grandees: requests, refusals and the giving of advice. As we shall see, various semiformulaic routines and strategies developed to help ease the tension involved in these types of social interaction.

#### Requests

Requests can readily be perceived by individuals as impositions or intrusions. To be sure, the frequent exchange of favors was a standard part of the Roman social fabric, one that was institutionalized within the system of patronage. But such assistance still needed a degree of negotiation, according to the kind of favor being requested and the writer’s relationship with the individuals concerned. In a letter to the Magistrates and Town Council of Fabrateria Vetus, for example, Cicero requests help for an acquaintance, Q. Hippius, in the following way (*Fam.* 13.76.1; SB 62): *tantae mihi cum Q. Hippii causae necessitudinis sunt ut nihil possit esse coniunctius quam nos inter nos sumus. quod nisi ita esset, uterer mea consuetudine, ut vobis nulla in re molestus essem.* (“I am attached to Q. Hippius by so many bonds that no relationship could be closer than ours. Otherwise I would not be departing



from my practice of never proving troublesome to you.”)<sup>1</sup> The closing phrase here is similar to those used by Q. Catulus and Caesar Strabo in the scene from *De oratore* discussed in the introductory chapter. Cicero acknowledges the potentially troublesome nature of his request, and by doing so shows the town council an appropriate degree of concern and respect.<sup>2</sup> This courtesy (he hopes) will go some way toward offsetting any irritation caused by his petition.

The semiconventionalized nature of this kind of remark is confirmed by a request to Q. Minucius Thermus, governor of Asia, to expedite the business affairs of one of Cicero's acquaintances (*Fam.* 13.56.1; SB 131): *nunc, quoniam mihi ab amico officiosissimo tantum oneris imponitur, ego quoque tibi imponam pro tuis in me summis officiis, ita tamen ut tibi nolim molestus esse.* (“Now since a most dutiful friend of mine places such a burden on my shoulders, I for my part shall place it on yours in consideration of the important duties you have performed for me in the past—but with the proviso that I don't want to prove troublesome to you.”) Cicero tactfully reduces the coercive element of the request by suggesting that Minucius need not comply if the matter is too troublesome. As often, the essence of politeness lies in showing an awareness of another person's feelings. Cicero's remark also confirms the widespread conceptualization of requests as a potential imposition and burden (note the terms *tantum oneris imponitur* and *imponam*).

A rather more deferential strategy is for the writer to ask the addressee to forgive the intrusion.<sup>3</sup> By doing so, the writer effectively admits to being at fault, a move that threatens his own face and so offers symbolic compensation for the request's imposition. Such an admission of fault also implies that the addressee has some grounds for refusal. This strategy usually employs some form of the verb *ignosco*, as we see in the following request from Cicero to Plotius Plancus (*Att.* 16.16E.1; SB 407E):

*ignosce mihi quod, cum antea accuratissime de Buthrotiis ad te scripserim, eadem de re saepius scribam. non mehercule, mi Plance, facio quo parum confidam aut liberalitati tuae aut nostrae amicitiae, sed, cum tanta res agatur Attici nostri, nunc vero etiam existimatio....*

Forgive me for writing yet again about a matter on which I have already written to you in considerable detail, namely the Buthrotian case. On my word, my dear Plancus, I am not doing so out of any lack of confidence in your liberal inclinations or our friendship; but since it is of so much consequence to our friend Atticus financially, and now in reputation as well....<sup>4</sup>

As this example shows, sometimes several strategies need to be combined in order to construct an effective piece of facework. Cicero has in fact already sent two letters to Plotius regarding the matter at hand.<sup>5</sup> By now repeating his request, he not only intrudes a third time; he also runs the risk of implying that Plotius has not been as helpful, generous or efficient as he could have been. Cicero therefore needs to give earnest assurances that this is not the case.<sup>6</sup>

The use of *mi* with direct address in this context further highlights the complexity of this kind of social transaction. As well as deploying redressive politeness to mitigate Plotius' possible irritation, Cicero includes a strategy of affiliative politeness in an attempt to cultivate a sense of warmth and intimacy with the man (and so encourage his cooperation). A request, then, can aim at several interpersonal goals at the same time.<sup>7</sup>

Another common strategy when making a request involves offering the addressee an "out."<sup>8</sup> By explicitly acknowledging that the addressee has legitimate reasons for not being able (or not wanting) to fulfill the request, the writer lowers the sense of expectation for compliance; the request is thus made less coercive, and the writer succeeds in demonstrating a sympathetic appreciation of the addressee's position. In a letter to Q. Philippus, for example, Cicero adds an important qualification to his request (*Fam.* 13.73.2; SB 273): <a> *te autem pro vetere nostra necessitudine etiam atque etiam peto ut eius filios, qui in tua potestate sunt, mihi potissimum condones, nisi quid existimas in ea re violari existimationem tuam.* ("But on behalf of our long friendship, I repeatedly ask you to spare his sons, who are in your hands, if only as a favor to me, unless you think your reputation would thereby be in any way compromised.")<sup>9</sup> Cicero here provides Philippus with a ready-made excuse for not complying with his request, and in so doing shows his appreciation of the delicate nature of the situation. Indeed, he insists that Philippus' reputation must take preference over anything else (*Fam.* 13.73.2): *quod ego si arbitrarer, numquam te rogarem, mihiq; tua fama multo antiquior esset quam illa necessitudo est.* ("If I thought that, I would not dream of asking you—your reputation would be of much more consequence in my eyes than the connection I have mentioned.") Cicero thus gives Philippus greater latitude for refusing the request. Once this facework has been accomplished, however, he goes on to assert that the request can in fact be fulfilled readily enough, although even here he includes a tactfully diffident parenthesis: *sed mihi ita persuadeo (potest fieri ut fallar) eam rem laudi tibi potius quam vituperationi fore.* ("But I am persuaded (I may be wrong) that such action will bring you commendation rather than criticism.") As we saw in chapter 1, judging how much pressure to apply when making a request is a delicate matter.

Cicero deploys a similar approach in a request to C. Cluvius, written on behalf of the town of Atella in late 46 or early 45 B.C. (*Fam.* 13.7.1; SB 320):

*post tuam autem profectionem cum et maxima res municipi honestissimi mihiq[ue] coniunctissimi et summum meum officium ageretur, pro tuo animo in me singulari existimavi me oportere ad te accuratius scribere, etsi non sum nescius et quae temporum ratio et quae tua potestas sit tibiq[ue] negotium datum esse a C. Caesare, non iudicium, praeclare intellego. qua re a te tantum peto quantum et te facere posse et libenter mea causa facturum esse arbitror.*

Nevertheless, bearing in mind your extraordinarily friendly disposition toward me, I thought I ought to write to you in greater detail, since the matter involves both a major financial interest of a highly respected township with which I have close ties, and an important obligation for me personally—although I am not unaware of the present situation and the extent of your powers, and fully understand that C. Caesar has assigned you a piece of business, not instructed you to exercise your discretion. I am therefore asking of you only so much as I think you can perform, and will gladly perform for my sake.

Cicero here gives Cluvius various outs, acknowledging the uncertain *temporum ratio* and showing a tactful appreciation of the limits of his authority. The legal scholar J. M. Kelly has argued that such face-saving remarks are little more than a conventionalized ritual that the recipient knows to ignore.<sup>10</sup> In these letters, then, (Kelly claims) we have tangible evidence for the subversive influence of aristocratic patronage on the impartial administration of the law. Cicero attempts quite blatantly to induce provincial governors to bend their legal decisions in favor of his own friends and clients. This view is probably too cynical. Certainly, as David Braund well shows, governors were often susceptible to this kind of croneyism.<sup>11</sup> But it does not follow that Cicero's polite phrases were thus devoid of all meaning and function. It would be inappropriate for an aristocrat to make such requests too casually or glibly. As Cotton notes, "only certain appeals are tolerated and the tactful writer will not go beyond these."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, we should not assume that such requests would automatically be successful. The two parties in a provincial dispute could both have aristocratic supporters in Rome.<sup>13</sup> Cicero cannot take a governor's support for granted. In such circumstances these face-saving clauses help to smooth the path in a potentially fraught social negotiation.

Cicero then had at his disposal an array of strategies that enabled him to frame requests in a way appropriate to the given context and individuals involved. But if making petitions could be a delicate social business, declining them was no less tricky a task.

## Refusals

To refuse a request can readily be interpreted as a form of social rejection, as a disparaging evaluation of the petitioner's standing in the community. The potential damage to an individual's sense of social importance (or "positive face" in Brown and Levinson's terminology) is thus considerable, and a tactful person will make efforts to mitigate any such reaction when framing a refusal. The linguistic strategies deployed in this kind of situation constitute a second form of redressive politeness.

In Cicero's case such situations seems to have arisen fairly frequently in connection with requests for his services as a speaker in the law courts. Indeed, his brother specifically observes in his handbook on electioneering (*Commentariolum Petitionis*) that to refuse such requests during an electoral campaign can easily lead to a significant loss of support.<sup>14</sup> Quintus' first solution to this problem is a cynically pragmatic one: refuse no one, even if you suspect that you will not be able to keep your promise.<sup>15</sup> Quintus also acknowledges, however, that there are some requests to which the political candidate cannot honorably agree, such as helping in a suit against a friend.<sup>16</sup> For such situations, he outlines in effect three strategies of redressive politeness (Q. Cic. *Comm. Pet.* 45): *belle negandum est, ut ostendas necessitudinem, demonstres quam moleste feras, aliis te id rebus exsarturum esse persuadeas*. ("You must refuse graciously, making clear your obligation to your friend, showing how sorry you are, assuring the man that you will patch it all up in other ways.") The offer of compensatory services at a later date functions clearly enough as a form of reparation. The other two strategies, however, are perhaps best appreciated by considering a specific incident in which Cicero himself makes his own attempt at a polite refusal.

In *Att.* 1.1 (SB 10), dated July 65 B.C., we learn that Cicero has recently declined to appear as a witness on behalf of Atticus' uncle Q. Caecilius in a law suit against a certain Caninius Satyrus. Caecilius, who was evidently a rather ill-tempered man, did not react well to this rebuff, and Cicero writes to Atticus to try to explain his decision.<sup>17</sup> He begins his account of the matter with a solemn request for forgiveness (*Att.* 1.1.3; SB 10): *sed est quod abs te mihi ignosci pervelim*. ("But I have something to tell you for which I very much hope you will forgive me.") The admission of guilt implicit in his use

of *ignosci* here establishes a deferential tone and functions, as we saw in our earlier examples, as a form of redressive facework.<sup>18</sup> Cicero then proceeds to describe his meeting with Caecilius in some detail. From this account, we can discern some of the strategies that he employed when framing his refusal (*Att.* 1.1.3–4; SB 10):

*rogavit me Caecilius ut adessem contra Satyrum. dies fere nullus est quin hic Satyrus domum meam ventitet. observat L. Domitium maxime, me habet proximum. fuit et mihi et Quinto fratri magno usui in nostris petitionibus. sane sum perturbatus, cum ipsius Satyri familiaritate tum Domiti, in quo uno maxime ambitio nostra nititur. demonstravi haec Caecilio.*

Caecilius asked me to appear against Satyrus. Hardly a day passes without this Satyrus calling on me. L. Domitius comes first in his attentions, I next. He made himself most useful both to me and to my brother Quintus when we were candidates. I was naturally most embarrassed in view of my friendship not only with Satyrus but with Domitius, on whom my hopes of success depend beyond any other man. I explained all this to Caecilius.

With the phrase *sane sum perturbatus* Cicero tries to get Atticus to appreciate the awkwardness of the situation, and he may well have attempted to convey this embarrassment to Caecilius in their face-to-face encounter also. The emotional element is important: it demonstrates that he is taking Caecilius' request seriously. His refusal is thus not a glib or casual one. There is a similarity here with his brother's recommendation that the political candidate show great regret when declining a request (*demonstras quam moleste feras*). In both situations this display of anxiety functions as facework. The speaker indicates that the refusal is not undertaken lightly.

Next, Cicero attempts to explain to Caecilius the wider context of his decision, outlining in particular the long-standing social obligations that he has toward Satyrus. Again his approach closely matches the strategy suggested by his brother: explain the obligations of friendship that you have toward the third party (*ut ostendas necessitudinem*). Such loyalty to one's allies would have been accepted by most Roman aristocrats as reasonable grounds for declining a request. Nevertheless, Cicero goes a step further and assures Caecilius that in other circumstances he would certainly have complied with his request (*Att.* 1.1.4; SB 10): *simul et illud ostendi, si ipse unus cum illo uno contenderet, me ei satis facturum fuisse*. ("I made it clear at the same time that had the dispute been solely between himself and Satyrus I would have

met his wishes.”) But because the case involves other creditors and Caecilius has other people who can appear in court, Cicero gently asks him to understand the difficulties of his position (*Att.* 1.1.4): *aequum esse eum et officio meo consulere et tempori*. (“[I suggested] that it was reasonable for him to make allowance for my obligations and my present situation.”)

With this remark, Cicero presents the transaction as one to be governed by concerns of tact and consideration. Sophisticated individuals are sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of others and make accommodation for them. But it is precisely this refined sensibility, according to Cicero, that Caecilius lacks (*Att.* 1.1.4; SB 10): *durius accipere hoc mihi visus est quam vellem et quam homines belli solent*. (“I had the impression that he took this more grumpily than I would have wished or than is usual among cultured individuals.”) Cicero has tried hard to make his refusal as inoffensive as possible, but Caecilius fails to show a reciprocal refinement. The older man (Cicero diplomatically suggests) has behaved unreasonably.<sup>19</sup> And although his criticisms of Caecilius here are softened by the phrases *mihi visus est* and *quam vellem*, Cicero’s concluding comment has more of a sting in its tail (*Att.* 1.1.4): *et postea prorsus ab instituta nostra paucorum dierum consuetudine longe refugit*. (“And from that time on he entirely dropped our friendly contacts which had begun only a few days previously.”) Caecilius is now exposed as having had purely selfish motives for cultivating contacts with Cicero in the first place. This fickle behavior is implicitly contrasted with the long-standing obligations mutually upheld by Cicero and Satyrus. Nevertheless, Cicero carefully maintains a respectful tone as he continues with a formal request for Atticus’ forgiveness (*Att.* 1.1.4):

*abs te peto ut mihi hoc ignoscas et me existimes humanitate esse prohibitum ne contra amici summam existimationem miserrimo eius tempore venire, cum is omnia sua studia et officia in me contulisset.*

I ask you to forgive me in this matter, and to believe that it was good feeling that prevented me from acting against the fine reputation of a friend in great trouble, since he had given me every support and service in his power.

The use here of the verbs *abs te peto* and *ignoscas* establish the formality and deference of the routine. Moreover Cicero’s invocation of Satyrus’ *summa existimatio*, *studia* and *officia* reinforces the apparent sincerity and earnestness of the apology. At this point, however, Cicero does something rather unexpected. He suddenly drops this formal tone and admits with playful candor that his dutiful sense of loyalty to Satyrus may in fact be something

of a fiction (*Att.* 1.1.4; SB 10): *quod si voles in me esse durior, ambitionem putabis mihi obstitisse*. ("If however you want to take a more cynical view, you may assume that the exigencies of my candidature created the stumbling block.") Cicero wryly admits that perhaps it was not a deep-seated concern for *fides* that motivated his support of Satyrus but rather ruthless, calculating *ambitio*. (Cicero at this time was already in the process of organizing his candidature for the consular elections to be held in 64 B.C., in which the support of Satyrus would play a significant part.) He acknowledges that his decision to help the man may not have been as magnanimous and noble as his formal apology has just claimed.

This coy admission is good evidence of the degree of intimacy between Cicero and Atticus. Cicero here feels able to indulge in self-deprecating humor and toy with the social conventions that apply in such situations. He performs the polite formalities that Caecilius' umbrage evidently calls for; but he also adds a lightness of touch that his friend (he hopes) will appreciate (*Att.* 1.1.4): *ego autem arbitror, etiam si id sit, mihi ignoscendum esse*, ἐπεὶ οὐχ ἱερήιον οὐδὲ βοείην... ('I, however, consider that, even if it were so, I ought to be forgiven, 'since for no hide of bull nor slaughtered beast...')<sup>20</sup> His pursuit of the highly prized consulship, he suggests, warrants a hard-nosed and practical approach. But his use of this quote from Homer presents the justification in a disarming way, with its allusive appeal to Atticus' learning and ludic comparison of his own position with that of a Greek hero.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, as often, Cicero is careful not to let his wry humor descend into flippancy. He concludes the routine with an earnest assertion of his desire to make things right with Atticus: *spero tibi me causam probasse, cupio quidem certe*. ("I hope I have proved my case to you—I am certainly very eager to.")

This incident illustrates well the delicate social negotiations often required in the Roman patron's busy political life, and the role played within them by redressive politeness. As with Cicero's requests, we can discern several strategies that were commonly used when trying to limit the face-threat implicit in this kind of transaction. Indeed, as our next example shows, these strategies sometimes took the form of quasi-formulaic phrases.

As we have noted at various places in our discussion so far, during the first months of 49 B.C. Cicero was much occupied with the course of action he was to take as Caesar marched into Italy. Around the middle of January he left Rome and headed south to Formiae, inviting Atticus' freedman Dionysius to accompany him.<sup>22</sup> As we saw in chapter 1, the relationship between the two men was already strained, and Dionysius' refusal now to accompany Cicero did nothing to improve matters.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Cicero seems to have expected Dionysius to join him at a later date, and around

the middle of February he sent him another invitation. The terms in which Cicero describes his letter are worth noting (*Att.* 8.4.1; SB 156): *ad quem ego quas litteras, di immortales, miseram, quantum honoris significantis, quantum amoris!* ("And the letter I sent him, heavens above, what a respectful and affectionate letter it was!") As far as Cicero is concerned, the invitation elegantly combined the politeness of respect (*honor*) with earnest strategies of affiliative politeness (note *amor*). This courteous manner, however, met with a further refusal—one framed in disastrously blunt terms. As Cicero notes to Atticus (*Att.* 8.4.2; SB 156):

*quibus litteris ita respondit ut ego nemini cuius causam non reciperem. semper enim 'si potero,' 'si ante suscepta causa non impediar'; numquam reo cuiquam tam humili, tam sordido, tam nocenti, tam alieno tam praecise negavi quam hic mihi plane <sine> ulla exceptione praecidit.*

He answered my letter as I would never answer a man whose case I was not going to take. One always says "if I can manage it," "if I am not hindered by another case already undertaken." I have never given any defendant, no matter how humble, how abject, how guilty, how complete a stranger, such a curt refusal as this quite unqualified "no" I have had from Dionysius.

Dionysius, it seems, has a particular talent for provocative gaucheness. Evidently, he managed to exclude all forms of redressive facework from his refusal of Cicero's request. But no less important for our present discussion is Cicero's revelation that he himself usually has to hand a repertoire of polite phrases such as *si potero* and *si ante suscepta causa non impediar* for use when declining requests for legal help. These remarks appear designed to convey a generally supportive attitude to his petitioners, while reserving for himself the right to refuse on the grounds of prior obligations or pressure of business.<sup>24</sup> These courteous touches help to save the face of these acquaintances, and Cicero stresses that he makes it a rule to treat even the most humble of them (*numquam reo cuiquam tam humile, tam sordido*) with such civility. For a foreign freedman to reciprocate with such bluntness, especially one who has been shown *honor* and *amor*, is extremely galling to Cicero.

Atticus quickly grasped the gravity of the situation. Realizing that the matter called for some reparation, he immediately urged Dionysius to undertake a personal visit to Cicero in order to make amends.<sup>25</sup> Cicero describes the meeting in some detail. He claims to have received Dionysius in a kind and generous way (*liberalissime*), assuring him that he was not being asked



to do anything against his will (*Att.* 8.10; SB 159). Dionysius' response is paraphrased as follows (*Att.* 8.10): *respondit se quod in nummis haberet nescire quo loci esset; alios non solvere, aliorum diem nondum esse. dixit etiam alia quaedam de servulis suis qua re nobiscum esse non posset.* ("He replied that he did not know what shape his investments were in. Some of his debtors were not paying, others were not yet due to pay. He added some stuff about his slaves as a reason why he could not keep us company.") Cicero affects here a measure of disdain for these claims (note the indefinite *alia quaedam* and the diminutive *servulis*); but they were presumably intended as a form of facework. Like Cicero's own remarks to Caecilius in our previous example, they help to create the impression that the unwelcome refusal has not been made on personal grounds. Dionysius implies that his reluctance to travel with Cicero has nothing to do with the difficulties in their relationship; it is simply a matter of financial and practical considerations. No doubt Dionysius could have saved himself a good deal of trouble if he had put this effort into the phrasing of his earlier epistolary refusal. Nevertheless, this belated show of respect does just enough to mollify Cicero (*Att.* 8.10; SB 159): *morem gessi.* ("I let him have his way.") Indeed, he takes steps to ensure that Dionysius does not receive a strongly worded letter that he had sent off before the man's unexpected arrival.<sup>26</sup> But the resentment simmered. A month or so later he was still fuming at Dionysius' behavior, in uncharacteristically harsh terms that drew comment from Atticus.<sup>27</sup>

Such disagreements were naturally more difficult to resolve when conducted at a distance with no opportunity for face-to-face negotiations. Our final example features a wholly epistolary exchange involving matters of rather more weighty significance. On June 30, 43 B.C., M. Lepidus was declared a public enemy by the senate following his continued support of Antony's forces. One consequence was that Lepidus' children forfeited their patrimony, and perhaps also their civic rights.<sup>28</sup> Lepidus' wife Junia was the sister of M. Brutus, and both she and her mother Servilia pleaded with Cicero to intercede in the senate on the children's behalf.<sup>29</sup> Cicero, however, refused, and in *ad Brut.* 1.12.1 (SB 21) he attempts to justify this decision to Brutus.

Cicero employs in the letter two of the strategies that we have already identified. He begins by depicting his decision as one that has caused him considerable emotional turmoil (*ad Brut.* 1.12.1; SB 21): *nihil tuli gravius quam me non posse matris tuae precibus cedere, non sororis.* ("Nothing has distressed me more than my inability to comply with your mother's and your sister's entreaties.") Cicero thus stresses that his decision has not been taken lightly, and he conveys a degree of emotional empathy and concern for Brutus' family. The rest of his argument, however, relies on shifting the

focus away from emotion and sentiment, and toward the strict application of the law (*ad Brut.* 1.12.2; SB 21): *nec vero me fugit quam sit acerbum parentum scelera filiorum poenis lui. sed hoc praeclare legibus comparatum est, ut caritas liberorum amiciores parentis rei publicae redderet.* ("Certainly, I recognize the harshness of visiting the sins of the father on the children. But the laws have very wisely ordained this in order that parental affection may better dispose fathers to the commonwealth.")<sup>30</sup> The responsibility for the fate of Lepidus' children can thus be placed on the father himself (*ad Brut.* 1.12.2; SB 21): *itaque Lepidus crudelis in liberos, non is qui Lepidum hostem iudicat.* ("Therefore it is Lepidus who is cruel to his children, not he that declares Lepidus a public enemy.") The argument is highly legalistic and rational. But although it appeals first and foremost to cool logic, there is a degree of face-work, too, behind these remarks. By carefully presenting such arguments, Cicero makes it clear that his refusal does not derive from any personal animosity toward Brutus. Brutus may not be happy with his reasoning and its conclusion; but the detailed explanation may prevent him from taking umbrage at Cicero's refusal. As we have seen, Quintus in his handbook on electoral campaigns advises his brother to invoke the claims of friendship when declining a request; in this case Cicero trumps the claims of friendly obligations with his duty to the republic.<sup>31</sup>

Redressive politeness thus played an important role in helping to maintain working relationships with colleagues and acquaintances. Given the complex nexus of personal and political obligations in Rome, it was impossible for the aristocrat to please all his friends all of the time. As we have seen, formulating refusals was no less a part of the aristocrat's chores than writing requests, and various strategies of politeness evolved to help facilitate this task. With men such as Caecilius, even the most diplomatic phrasing failed to prevent tension and rupture. But in other cases, politeness and courtesy in one's refusal could pay important dividends. As Quintus Cicero wryly observes (*Q. Cic. Comm. Pet.* 46):

*audiui hoc dicere quendam de quibusdam oratoribus, ad quos causam suam detulisset, gratiorem sibi orationem <eius> fuisse qui negasset quam illius qui receperisset; sic homines fronte et oratione magis quam ipso beneficio reque capiuntur.*

I have heard someone say this about certain advocates to whom he had referred his case: that he was more gratified by the words of the one who refused than by those of him who accepted. For people are charmed more by one's manner and words than by the actual favor itself.

## Giving Advice to the Powerful

To offer advice to acquaintances can be a delicate business. Certainly, our counsel may be intended as an earnest indication of our care and concern. But it can also generate resentment. Such advice, however well-intentioned, risks casting the addressee in the role of clueless incompetent and presenting the speaker as smug know-it-all. There is often, too, an element of intrusion in such offers of help. The dispenser of advice can easily be viewed as interposing opinions where they are not wanted. Giving advice then is a potentially face-threatening act, and strategies of redressive politeness may be required if we are to avoid giving offense.<sup>32</sup>

Roman aristocrats seem to have been very sensitive to these issues. This sensitivity is another index of their concern with personal *dignitas* and face, and the extent to which personal interaction with peers could be viewed as an arena for competition rather than cooperation. Powerful senators, used to administering huge estates and extended households, not to mention overseas provinces within the empire, did not always take kindly to people offering advice about how to run their affairs. Cicero's correspondence illustrates some of the strategies of redressive politeness that he and his peers regularly employed in their attempts to perform this difficult task successfully.

Our first example comes from a letter written by Cicero to Marcus Claudius Marcellus (cos. 50 B.C.) in 46 B.C. As we saw in chapter 1, Marcellus was at this time living in exile in Mytilene following his opposition to Caesar in the civil war. When Caesar agreed in September to allow him to return to Rome, Cicero wrote urging Marcellus to accept the offer. The letter, however, posed numerous challenges. Not only was he trying to offer advice to an ex-consul from one of Rome's most prestigious families; he somehow had to make a good case for Marcellus' return without appearing too critical of the man's previous course of action. He begins the letter then with an elaborately constructed and syntactically complex sentence (*Fam.* 4.7.1; SB 230):

*etsi eo te adhuc consilio usum intellego ut id reprehendere non audeam, non quin ab eo ipse dissentiam sed quod ea te sapientia esse iudicem ut meum consilium non anteponam tuo, tamen et amicitiae nostrae vetustas et tua summa erga me benevolentia, quae mihi iam a pueritia tua cognita est, me hortata est ut ea scriberem ad te quae et saluti tuae conducere arbitrarer et non aliena esse ducerem a dignitate.*

Although I understand that up until now you have followed a policy such as I would not dare to criticize—not that I do not disagree with it, but because I consider you to be endowed with such wisdom that

I would not place my advice ahead of your own—nevertheless, both the length of our friendship and your notable goodwill toward me, which has been evident ever since your boyhood, have urged me to write what I consider to be conducive to your welfare and judge not incompatible with your prestige.

Cicero here strives for a delicate balance between signalling his disagreement with Marcellus and mitigating any sense of challenge. The phrase *id reprehendere non audeam* in particular establishes a deferential tone, and we find variations of *non audeo* used elsewhere in the correspondence to convey a similar kind of reticence.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, although Cicero in fact admits that he disagrees with Marcellus' previous policy (*non quin dissentiam*), he quickly adds a respectful acknowledgment of Marcellus' own wisdom (*meum consilium non antepoſui tuo*). Cicero works hard to avoid any hint of arrogance or presumption. Indeed, he carefully characterizes his advice as prompted by the demands of their friendship (*amicitia*) and the obligations generated by Marcellus' long-standing *benevolentia* toward him. He also insists that his remarks are motivated by a concern for Marcellus' welfare and social standing (*salus* and *dignitas*). This is redressive facework at its most cautious.

Cicero, however, is not alone in the care that he takes over such details. In March 49 B.C., Oppius and Balbus write to the orator to advise him to maintain a stance of neutrality in the impending conflict between Pompey and Caesar. Naturally the situation is a rather awkward one. Their close relations with Caesar give Oppius and Balbus a clout that Cicero cannot ignore; but in terms of political achievement, they are far junior to him.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, their advice could easily be perceived as self-interested, even coercive. In these circumstances, they begin their letter as follows (*Att.* 9.7A.1; SB 174A):

*nedum hominum humilium, ut nos sumus, sed etiam amplissimo-  
rum virorum consilia ex eventu, non ex voluntate a plerisque probari  
solent. tamen freti tua humanitate quod verissimum nobis videbitur  
de eo quod ad nos scripsisti tibi consilium dabimus. quod si non fuerit  
prudens, at certe ab optima fide et optimo animo proficiscetur.*

Not just the advice of humble folk like us, but even that of great men is generally judged by the outcome, not by its intention. None the less, relying on your considerate nature we shall give you the advice which seems to us the soundest on the matter about which you have written to us. If it turns out not to be wise, it is at any rate offered in the best faith and with the best intention.

With their initial phrase (*nedum hominum humilium, ut nos sumus*) Oppius and Balbus establish a modest, deferential pose. They lay no claim to being men of importance. Indeed, the contrast drawn between *eventus* and *voluntas* develops this pose as they acknowledge the potential fallibility of their advice, and this self-effacing manner is further reinforced by the phrase *quod si non fuerit prudens*. Caesar's diplomats prepare their ground very carefully.<sup>35</sup>

This punctilious concern not to cause offense may be usefully contrasted with the epistolary style employed by Pompey in his correspondence with Domitius Ahenobarbus during February 49 B.C.. The situation at the time was an urgent one. Caesar's forces were now marching through Italy, and Pompey was trying to assemble all available troops with him at Luceria.<sup>36</sup> Domitius, however, who had some thirty cohorts at his disposal, seems to have had serious reservations about this strategy and had evidently not responded to Pompey's plan as quickly as he might have done.<sup>37</sup> At this moment of high tension and uncertainty, Pompey writes Domitius the following letter (*Att.* 8.12B.1; SB 162B):

*valde miror te ad me nihil scribere et potius ab aliis quam a te de re publica me certiolem fieri. nos disiuncta manu pares adversariis esse non possumus; contractis nostris copiis spero nos et rei publicae et communi saluti prodesse posse. quam ob rem cum constituisses, ut Vibullius mihi scripserat, a. d. V Id. Febr. Corfinio proficisci cum exercitu et ad me venire, miror quid causae fuerit qua re consilium mutaris.*

I am very surprised that you do not write to me and that I am informed on matters of state by others rather than by you. With our force split we cannot be a match for the enemy; by concentrating our troops I hope we may be able to serve the state and the general welfare. For this reason I am at a loss to understand why, when you had decided (as Vibullius wrote to me) to leave Corfinium with your army on February 9 and join me, you subsequently changed your plans.

The opening is brusque. Pompey eschews courteous introductory remarks and begins instead with the impatient phrase *valde miror*. The use of *miror* in such contexts is usually politely euphemistic. Roman aristocrats often affect a degree of restraint by depicting themselves merely as "surprised" by the situation at hand, when in fact irritation or annoyance might be expected.<sup>38</sup> But because this restraint was regularly associated with contexts of social

tension, a sense of impatience was probably never far away. Indeed, Pompey in this case seems to emphasize the note of exasperation with his addition of *valde*.

Pompey's next observation is presented as incontrovertible fact: *nos disiecta manu pares adversariis esse non possumus*. This is the language of a decisive man, sure of his opinion and unwilling to debate the point. He continues by pointing out that Domitius has been inconsistent (*cum constituisses...consilium mutaris*). The charge of *inconstantia* was a serious one to bring against a Roman aristocrat, and Pompey dismisses abruptly the explanation for Domitius' actions that has been reported (Att. 8.12B.1; SB 162B): *nam illa causa quam mihi Vibullius scribit levis est, te propterea moratum esse quod audieris Caesarem Firmo progressum in Castrum Truentinum venisse*. ("The reason which Vibullius gives me, that you delayed because you heard Caesar had advanced from Firmum and reached Castrum Truentinum, carries little weight.") Instead of offering Domitius an out, Pompey actually rejects the most convenient face-saving excuse available. Indeed, he goes on to state what Domitius *ought* to have done—an approach that inevitably challenges Domitius' competence, since it implies that Pompey himself knows better than his correspondent (Att. 8.12B.1): *quanto enim magis appropinquare adversarius coepit, eo tibi celerius agendum erat ut te mecum coniungeres prius quam Caesar aut tuum iter impedire aut me abs te excludere posset*. ("For the nearer the enemy's approach, the faster you should have acted in order to join me before Caesar was in a position either to interfere with your march or to cut me off from you.") Pompey's tone, then, is curt and admonitory, and he makes little attempt to treat Domitius with any great respect.<sup>39</sup> He goes on, however, to make a request (Att. 8.12B.2):

*quam ob rem etiam <atque etiam> te rogo et hortor, id quod non desisti superioribus litteris a te petere, ut primo quoque die Luceriam ad <me> venires, ante quam copiae quas instituit Caesar contrahere in unum locum coactae vos a nobis distrahant.*

Accordingly I repeatedly request and urge you, as I have continually asked you in my previous letters, to come to me at Luceria on the earliest possible day before those forces which Caesar has begun to muster are collected at one point so as to cut you off from us.

The language here is largely conventional and forced on Pompey by his constitutional position. He does not possess the authority to issue commands to Domitius; all he can do is present a formal request.<sup>40</sup> Even this, however, he endows with a sense of frustration through his inclusion of the remark

*id quod non destiti superioribus litteris a te petere.* Domitius (he implies) has already failed on several occasions to do what he has requested.

Several factors may contribute to Pompey's tone here. The letter was clearly written in pressing circumstances, and it is understandable enough if the usual concern with social niceties is temporarily suspended.<sup>41</sup> Pompey may well be genuinely perplexed and disturbed by Domitius' recent actions, and his quick note candidly reflects the fact. But the long-standing personal and political differences between the two men may also have played a part. Pompey had been responsible for the death of Domitius' brother Gnaeus in 82 B.C.;<sup>42</sup> and in 55 B.C. he had violently opposed Domitius' attempts to stand for consul.<sup>43</sup> These two proud and strong-willed men were never going to get on easily, and the strains of the moment perhaps sharpened Pompey's existing animosity. Nevertheless, we can discern a slight thawing in his manner five days later as he responds to Domitius' reply to this curt letter (*Att.* 8.12C.1; SB 162C):<sup>44</sup>

*te animo magno et forti istam rem agere existimo, sed diligentius nobis est videndum ne distracti pares esse adversario non possimus, cum ille magnas copias habeat et maiores brevi habiturus sit. non enim pro tua providentia debes illud solum animadvertere, quot in praesentia cohortis contra te habeat Caesar, sed quantas brevi tempore equitum et peditum copias contracturus sit.*

I believe you have handled this matter with a generous and courageous spirit, but we must be careful to avoid a situation in which we are divided and therefore no match for the enemy, since he has large forces and will soon have larger. It would not do credit to your foresight to consider only how many cohorts Caesar has against you at the present moment without regard to the size of the forces, both horse and foot, which he will shortly muster.

There are several concessions to politeness here: Pompey expresses appreciation of Domitius' *animo magno et forti*; through his use of *nobis* (in the phrase *nobis est videndum*) he suggests that the two of them are involved in a cooperative venture, rather than rivals; and the phrase *pro tua providentia* deftly suggests that Pompey is offering advice out of a desire to protect Domitius' reputation. Indeed, by going on to supply reasons for his point of view, Pompey shows that he is not being wilful or perverse in his disagreement with Domitius' tactics (*Att.* 8.12C.1; SB 162C): *cui rei testimonio sunt litterae quas Bussenius ad me misit.* ("That is attested by a letter sent to me by Bussenius.") These details are relatively small, amounting to just a word here or a phrase there, but their

effect is tangible. Evidently Pompey can adapt his epistolary manner to meet the requirements of courtesy when he feels inclined to do so.

We find a similar pattern in two letters written by Pompey to Cicero around the same time. In the first, he writes (*Att.* 8.11A; SB 161A):<sup>45</sup>

*Q. Fabius ad me venit a. d. IIII Id. Febr. is nuntiat L. Domitium cum suis cohortibus XI<I> et cum cohortibus XIII quas Vibullius adduxit ad me iter habere; habuisse in animo proficisci Corfinio a. d. V Id. Febr.; C. Hirrum cum V cohortibus subsequi. censeo ad nos Luceriam venias; nam te hic tutissime puto fore.*

Q. Fabius came to me on February 10. He reports that L. Domitius is on his way to join me with twelve cohorts of his own and fourteen brought in by Vibullius, that he intended to leave Corfinium on February 9, and that C. Hirrus is following with five cohorts. I advise you to join us at Luceria, as I think you will be safest here.

The manner here is business-like and gives the impression that the letter was composed in haste. (It may well have been dictated to a scribe.)<sup>46</sup> Pompey dispenses with all courtesies and confines himself to conveying essential military information. He then offers advice in a straightforward and unapologetic manner. The only concession to facework is his phrase at the end (*nam te hic tutissime puto fore*), which suggests a concern for Cicero's welfare—although Cicero rather tetchily interprets a similar phrase in an earlier letter from Pompey as a veiled criticism.<sup>47</sup> A few days later, he sends the orator a second letter (*Att.* 8.11C; SB 161C):

*s. v. b. tuas litteras libenter legi; recognovi enim tuam pristinam virtutem etiam in salute communi. consules ad eum exercitum quem in Apulia habui venerunt. magno opere te hortor pro tuo singulari perpetuoque studio in rem publicam ut te ad nos conferas, ut communi consilio rei publicae afflictae opem atque auxilium feramus. censeo via Appia iter facias et celeriter Brundisium venias.*

Greetings. I was glad to read your letter, recognizing your old spirit still at the disposal of the public welfare. The consuls have joined the army under my command in Apulia. I strongly urge you, in view of your extraordinary and unwavering patriotism, to make your way over to us, so that through our joint counsel we may bring aid and comfort to our afflicted country. I advise you to travel by the Appian Way and come quickly to Brundisium.



Again, there are a few courteous touches here. The expression *libenter legi* attempts a measure of affiliative politeness, while the references to Cicero's *pristina virtus* and *studium in rem publicam* are nicely complimentary. Pompey also presents the two of them as undertaking a cooperative enterprise for the common good (*ut communi consilio...feramus*). These touches, however, do not satisfy Cicero. He complains to Atticus that he finds Pompey's manner rather casual (*Att.* 8.11.6; SB 161): *epistularum Pompei duarum quas ad me misit negligentiam meamque in rescribendo diligentiam volui tibi notam esse*. ("I wanted you to know the offhand style of two letters sent me by Pompey and the especial care with which I answered them.") This reaction illustrates again the Roman aristocrat's expectation that he be treated with a generous measure of respect. To omit such niceties had the potential to harm seriously a working relationship. Cicero's remarks, moreover, make us wonder whether Pompey's second letter to Domitius was sufficiently conciliatory to repair the rift that was evidently opening between them.<sup>48</sup> Pompey's casual manner also seems to have suffered in comparison with Caesar's more expansive efforts at political courtship at this time (*Att.* 8.11.5; SB 161): *quod quaeris quid Caesar ad me scrips<er>it, quod saepe, gratissimum sibi esse quod quierim, oratque in eo ut perseverem*. ("As for your question about what Caesar writes to me: the usual—that he is most grateful that I have laid low and he begs me to continue in this course of action.") The superlative *gratissimum* here and the verb *orat* (rather than *petit* or *rogat*) suggest a degree of fulsomeness in Caesar's manner that Pompey's letters seem to lack.

But it would be unfair to judge Pompey's skill as a correspondent solely on these brief letters written at a time of great stress.<sup>49</sup> These are, after all, a tiny proportion of the hundreds, even thousands of letters he would have written during his extensive political career. Cicero in fact describes him as an excellent writer (*scriptor luculentus*) as far as public letters are concerned (*Att.* 7.17.2; SB 141). This proficiency, however, probably had more to do with effective rhetorical training in persuasive technique than an accomplishment in the kind of expansive political courtship apparent in many of the letters in Cicero's *Ad Familiares*.<sup>50</sup> As a leading player in Roman politics, Pompey must have been well aware of his acquaintances' concern with their *dignitas*, and at times he could evidently exert considerable charm over those around him, at least in face-to-face settings.<sup>51</sup> But, as far as we can tell, he was not inclined to undertake epistolary courtship of his peers in an especially energetic or urbane fashion. As a matter of personal style he did not engage in strategies of politeness in quite the same way or to the same extent as did Cicero himself and a good number of his other correspondents.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, Pompey's approach to epistolary interaction can be usefully contrasted with that of Decimus Brutus. Gebhard's analysis of Decimus'

correspondence presents a picture of the general as a straight-talking, unpretentious military man, more interested in grappling with day-to-day business than in social ceremony.<sup>53</sup> Yet this is not quite the whole story. Decimus in fact demonstrates quite a discerning grasp of epistolary courtesy. In *Fam.* 11.9, for example, written in March 43 B.C. shortly after the second battle of Mutina, he informs Cicero of his intended military actions against Antony and asks for help in dealing with Lepidus (*Fam.* 11.9.1; SB 380): *ego ne consistere possit in Italia Antonius dabo operam. sequar eum confestim. . . in primis rogo te ad hominem ventosissimum, Lepidum, mittas, ne bellum nobis redintegrare possit Antonio sibi coniuncto.* ("I will endeavor to ensure that Antonius is not able to make a stand in Italy. I will pursue him immediately. . . I especially ask you to write to that most unreliable man Lepidus, not to start up the war again for us by joining forces with Antonius.")<sup>54</sup> Decimus here addresses in quick succession various points of military business, and makes a simple request using conventionally polite formulas. To this extent, his approach shares some similarities with Pompey's; but it is significant that he adds the following remarks (*Fam.* 11.9.2; SB 380): *neque haec idcirco tibi scribo quod te non eadem animadvertere sciam, sed quod mihi persuasissimum est Lepidum recte facturum numquam, si forte vobis id de hoc dubium est.* ("I am not writing this to you because I'm aware that you are not making the same observations, but because I am absolutely convinced that Lepidus will never act properly—in case you at Rome have any doubts about him.") Unlike Pompey, Decimus here makes a special effort to ensure that his request is not interpreted as an implicit criticism of Cicero's political acumen. Even in quite a stressful situation, Decimus shows a sensitivity to matters of courtesy that Pompey seems more inclined to ignore. He appreciates the importance of treating Cicero as a respected partner; Pompey's tendency is to offer advice and instructions from a position of superiority.

Decimus displays the same respectful manner in other letters too. In *Fam.* 11.20, confronted again by pressing political circumstances, he writes to advise Cicero on various military matters (*Fam.* 11.20.3; SB 401):

*illud vide, ne timendo magis timere cogare, et <tamen> quibus rebus potest occurri veteranis, occurras: primum quod desiderant de decem viris facias, deinde de praemiis, si tibi videtur, agros eorum militum qui cum Antonio veterani fuerunt iis dandos censeas ab utrisque nobis. de nummis lente ac ratione habita pecuniae; senatum de ea re constituturum.*

Only you must be careful that fearing does not give you further cause for fear; and at the same time you should meet the veterans on whatever

issues you can. First, do what they want about the Commission of Ten. Second, with regard to gratuities, you should propose, if you think fit, that the lands of the veteran soldiers who were with Antony be assigned them by the two of us, and as regards cash, say that the Senate will take time to decide in the light of the financial situation.

Decimus' comments in this case are rather more assertive and detailed, and include a number of directives (*vide, occurras, facias, censeas*). But again he appends an assurance designed to offset any sense of overbearing presumption (*Fam.* 11.20.4; SB 401): *haec me tibi scribere non prudentia mea hortatur sed amor in te et cupiditas oti*. ("It is not my wisdom that impels me to write all this, but my affection for you and my desire for public tranquillity.") He is writing (he claims) not with any sense of superior insight, but because of his affectionate concern for Cicero. Indeed, he concludes a few lines later with the claim that the Roman republic cannot stand without Cicero's support (*Fam.* 11.20.4: *quod sine te consistere <non> potest*). Similar remarks in Cicero's own correspondence with Munatius Plancus suggest that this strategy is a semiconventionalized one. In a letter from 44 B.C., for example, Cicero follows a rather stern reprimand of Plancus' recent actions with the comment (*Fam.* 10.3.4; SB 355): *haec amore magis impulsus scribenda ad te putavi quam quo te arbitrarer monitis et praeceptis egere*. ("It was my affection for you that made me think I should write such things to you, rather than any idea that you were in need of admonition or advice.") Cicero thus tries to counter any resentment that his lecture might have provoked.<sup>55</sup>

The point that emerges most clearly from these examples is the Roman aristocrat's sensitivity to the whole business of giving and receiving advice. This was a matter that could easily cause resentment if not handled carefully. There were few problems if the addressee was happy to assume a junior role, as a protégé might well do with regard to a respected mentor. In the fictional context of Cicero's *De oratore*, for example, the experienced orators L. Crassus (cos. 95 B.C.) and M. Antonius (cos. 99 B.C.) are readily celebrated as superior practitioners of the rhetorical art by their younger companions, C. Aurelius Cotta (cos. 75 B.C.) and Sulpicius Rufus (tr. pl. 88 B.C.). Crassus can therefore adopt an instructional tone without embarrassment (*De or.* 1.34): *quam ob rem pergite, ut facitis, adulescentes, atque in id studium, in quo estis, incumbite*. ("So continue, as you are doing, young men, and press on with those studies in which you are engaged.")<sup>56</sup> For the same reason, it is a sign of refined courtesy when he affects to eschew the role of adviser at the start of the dialogue (*De or.* 1.30).<sup>57</sup> But among peers, the precise nature of the role that each adopted was a matter of ongoing negotiation. From one perspective, to dispense advice was to stake a claim to superiority. A didactic

tone could thus easily sound presumptuous, even insulting. For this reason Cicero makes considerable efforts to try to prevent any such implication in the semipublic letter of advice addressed to his brother Quintus on provincial administration (Q Fr. 1.1.18; SB 1):

*sed nescio quo pacto ad praecipendi rationem delapsa est oratio mea, cum id mihi propositum initio non fuisset; quid enim ei praecipiam quem ego in hoc praesertim genere intellegam prudentia non esse inferiorem quam me, usu vero etiam superiorem?*

Somehow or other as I write I have slipped into the role of mentor, which was not my original intention. Why should I give advice to someone whom I recognize as not inferior to myself in worldly wisdom, especially in this area, and even my superior in experience?

The comparatives *superiorem* and *inferiorem* here confirm the issues of rank implicit in the dispensing of advice. The very notion of writing a letter of advice was thus fraught with difficulties, and Cicero has to repeat these strategies of facework toward the end of his mini-lecture (Q Fr. 1.1.36; SB 1): *at ea quidem quae supra scripta sunt non ut te instituerem scripsi (neque enim prudentia tua cuiusquam praecepta desiderat), sed me in scribendo commemoratio tuae virtutis delectavit.* (“However, I have not written the foregoing to instruct you (your wisdom does not require anyone’s advice), but the writing gave me pleasure, the pleasure of recalling your fine qualities.”)<sup>58</sup> This was a tricky line to tread elegantly. Indeed, given that Cicero shows such polite diffidence when dispensing advice to his brother, it is not surprising that he reacts with dismay when he encounters Quintus’ freedman adopting with casual insouciance the role of sage instructor (Q Fr. 1.2.3; SB 2): *quam multa autem ipsum ἀφελῶς mecum in sermone ita posuisse, ‘id mihi non placuit,’ ‘monui,’ ‘suasi,’ ‘deterrui’?* (“How often do you suppose [Statius] himself in talking to me has naively used phrases like ‘I didn’t approve of that,’ ‘I suggested...,’ ‘I advised...,’ ‘I warned...’?”) For an ex-slave to be acting with such presumption (however naively) was profoundly disturbing to a man of consular rank. As far as Cicero was concerned, it was simply not Statius’ place to be offering advice and suggestions.<sup>59</sup>

### *Politeness and frankness*

This reticence about offering advice to peers contrasts sharply with the philosophical ideal presented in *De Amicitia*, where Cicero asserts that it is in fact the duty of friends to offer advice in a candid and forthright manner. This

is possible because, by definition, true friends always have each other's best interests at heart (*Amic.* 44).<sup>60</sup>

*consilium vero dare audeamus libere; plurimum in amicitia amicorum bene suadentium valeat auctoritas; eaque et adhibeatur ad monendum, non modo aperte sed etiam acriter, si res postulabit, et adhibitae pareatur.*

Indeed, let us be bold enough to give advice freely. In friendship the authority of friends who offer good advice should count for a great deal. It should be brought to bear in order to instruct a friend not just frankly, but even harshly if the affair demands. And when it has been brought to bear, it ought to be obeyed.

Cicero's letters to Atticus are often characterized by this kind of trusting intimacy and lack of formality—although, as we have seen, concerns of personal rank and status do on occasions intrude. We may suspect that other aristocratic Romans too enjoyed relationships not too far removed from this ideal (Catullus and Licinius Calvus perhaps, or Caesar and Balbus). And yet we also find this ideal rather cynically exploited by non-intimates as a form of politeness strategy. Cicero in 62 B.C., for example, aggrieved at Pompey's reticence in congratulating him on his handling of the Catilinarian conspiracy (see chapter 1), claims the right to write frankly to the general by invoking the close nature of their friendship (*Fam.* 5.73; SB 3): *ac ne ignores quid ego in tuis litteris desiderarim, scribam aperte, sicut et mea natura et nostra amicitia postulat*. ("Not to leave you in ignorance of the particular in which your letter has disappointed me, let me speak plainly, as my character and our friendship demand.") The strategy is a sly but effective one. In the first place, its assertion of friendship consolidates their relationship at the very moment when the accompanying frankness is likely to threaten it. Second, the strategy makes it very difficult for the addressee to respond in an overtly negative fashion. To do so would be to reject the claims of intimacy that have been asserted—a decisive move with significant consequences for their relationship.<sup>61</sup>

Naturally, this strategy works best when the claim to close friendship has a degree of plausibility to it. But the Roman notion of friendship was a malleable one, malleable enough in fact to allow Antony (as we saw in the previous chapter) to employ the convention in a letter to Cicero at a time of considerable tension between them.<sup>62</sup> Cicero in turn exploits the convention several years later in his First Philippic as he criticizes the methods that Antony is threatening to use to push through various laws (*Phil.* 1.26): *atque*

*haec dico de futuris, quod est amicorum ante dicere ea quae vitari possint.* (“I am speaking now of future events—it is the duty of friends to speak in advance of troubles that can be avoided.”)<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the strategy turns out to be a highly flexible one. Cicero uses it in a letter to Atticus in order to justify the tone not of his own remarks but of criticisms that Atticus has made of Cicero himself (*Att.* 12.41.3; SB 283): *quem iam etiam gravius accusas quam patitur tua consuetudo, sed facis summo amore et victus fortasse vitio meo.* (“You now actually criticize me in sterner language than your custom usually permits; but you do it out of the greatest affection and perhaps driven to it by my fault.”) The effect is a subtle one. Cicero lets Atticus know that the strong language has not gone unnoticed and he registers his discomfort with it. But at the same time he interprets Atticus’ motives optimistically and thus shows that no offense has been taken from the remarks.<sup>64</sup>

### *ut facis as a strategy of redressive politeness*

Finally, we may consider another strategy of politeness designed to ease the tensions involved in giving advice or issuing instructions to one’s peers: the inclusion of the phrase *ut facis* and similar expressions. This usage warrants detailed consideration because it seems to have received little attention from grammarians and students of Latin idiom.<sup>65</sup> As we shall see, its solicitous use in Cicero’s correspondence illustrates again the importance of redressive politeness when dealing with prestigious acquaintances.

The phrase *ut facis* is most often combined with the imperative form of verbs such as *pergo* and *incumbo*, which urge the addressee to press on with a particular course of action. By including the phrase, the writer tries to prevent the impression that his exhortation has been prompted by the addressee’s inaction or ignorance; he is merely urging the continuation of his current conduct. The following examples from Cicero’s letters to Atticus illustrate the conventionalized nature of the expression:

*Att.* 3.20.1 (SB 65): *ad quae recuperanda per fortunas incumbe, ut facis, diemque natalem redditus mei cura ut in tuis aedibus amoenissimis agam tecum et cum meis.* (“Try, for heaven’s sake, to recover all this, as you are doing, and make it possible for me to celebrate the birthday of my return in your delightful house with you and my family.”)

*Att.* 11.7.4 (SB 218): *haec tu perge, ut facis, mitigare et probare quam plurimis.* (“Do continue, as you are doing, to make these affairs of mine look better, and to get as many people as you can to approve them.”)

*Att. 13.32.1 (SB 305): quam ob rem, ut facis (istuc enim addi nihil potest), urge, insta, perface.* ("So, as you are doing (no addition is possible), urge on the project, follow it up, finish it.")

In this last example, the addition of the extra phrase *istuc enim addi nihil potest* confirms the face-saving aim of the convention: Cicero is careful to avoid any implication that Atticus has been remiss in his actions so far. The conventionalization of the phrase allows it to be added to a wide range of imperatives and instructions in order to soften their tone:

*Att. 3.11.2 (SB 56): tu me, ut facis, opera, consilio, gratia iuva.* ("On your side, help me, as you are doing, with effort, advice, and influence.")

*Att. 12.25.2 (SB 264): sed, ut facis, obsequere huic errori meo.* ("But indulge this aberration of mine, as you are doing.")

*Att. 12.48.1 (SB 289): Hirti librum, ut facis, divulga.* ("Publish Hirtius' book, as you are doing.")

*Att. 4.7.3 (SB 77): puerum Ciceronem curabis et amabis, ut facis.* ("Look after young Cicero and regard him with affection, as you do.")

*Fam. 16.22.1 (SB 185 to Tiro): de triclinio cura, ut facis.* ("See about the dining-room, as you are doing.")<sup>66</sup>

The expression can acquire an additional measure of urbanity if it is used with an imperative which itself implies a kind regard for the addressee rather than one that imposes an obligation. The most common examples involve Cicero bidding friends to write frequently or to take care of their health:

*Fam. 7.1.5 (SB 24 to M. Marius): tu modo istam imbecillitatem valetudinis tuae sustenta et tuere, ut facis, ut nostras villas obire et mecum simul leticula concursare possis.* ("Only you must prop up that frail health of yours and look after yourself, as you are doing, so that you can visit my places in the country and run around with me in my little litter.")

*Att. 9.7.7 (SB 174): sed quoniam et ingenium suppeditat (dico mehercule ut sentio) et amor, quo et meum ingenium incitatur, perge, ut facis, et scribe quantum potest.* ("But since you have both wit (on my word,

I say as I think) and affection, which stimulates even *my* wits, carry on as you are doing and write as much as you can.”)

The same principle is at work when the directive implies the writer’s desire for friendship with the addressee:

*Fam.* 5.21.5 (SB 182 to Mescinius Rufus): *me velim, ut facis, diligas val-etudinique tuae et tranquillitati animi servias.* (“I would like you to hold me in esteem, as you do, and pay close attention to your health and peace of mind.”)

*Fam.* 15.19.4 (SB 216; Cassius Longinus to Cicero): *ne longior sim, vale. me, ut facis, ama.* (“Not to be too long-winded, goodbye. Regard me with affection, as you do.”)<sup>67</sup>

Cicero also employs several variants of the expression. These differ in their wording but fulfill the same pragmatic function of redressive facework, as the following examples show (the relevant phrases are underlined):

*Att.* 12.37.2 (SB 276): *quamvis prudens ad cogitandum sis, sicut es, tamen, nisi magnae curae tibi esset ut ego consequerer id quod magno opere vellem, numquam ea res tibi tam belle in mentem venire potuisset.* (“However resourceful you may be (and are), this idea could not have occurred to you so neatly unless you had been really anxious for me to attain my heart’s wish.”)

*Att.* 12.41.2 (SB 283): *sed tamen feres hoc ipsum quod scribo ut omnia mea fers ac tulisti.* (“But you will be patient with these words that I write, as you are and ever have been patient with all I say and do.”)

*Fam.* 6.4.5 (SB 244 to A. Torquatus): *tu velim te, ut debes et soles, tua virtute sustentas.* (“I would ask you to rely for support on your own strength of mind, as is your duty and usual practice.”)

*Fam.* 9.11.2 (SB 250 to Dolabella): *non tam id laboro ut si qui mihi obtrectent a te refutentur quam intellegi cupio, quod certe intellegitur, me a te amari.* (“I am less concerned that you should rebut my detractors than anxious that your affection for me should be recognized, as it surely is.”)

*Fam.* 13.28.1 (SB 294 to Servius Sulpicius Rufus): *etsi libenter petere a te soleo si quid opus est meorum cuipiam, tamen multo libentius*



*gratias tibi ago, cum fecisti aliquid commendatione mea, quod semper facis.* ("Although I am generally ready enough to ask your assistance when any of my friends stands in need, it is with far greater readiness that I write to thank you when you have acted on my recommendation, as you always do.")

We can see then that the conventionalized phrase *ut facis* is just one manifestation of a frequently used broader strategy in which the writer attempts to ensure that no negative connotations can possibly be read into his remarks. In the last example, for instance, Cicero tries to ensure that the phrase *cum fecisti aliquid commendatione mea* cannot be negatively construed as implying that Sulpicius sometimes does *not* act on Cicero's recommendations. He thus solicitously acknowledges that Sulpicius is unfailingly helpful. The following passage gives another particularly elaborate version of this kind of strategy (*Fam.* 5.19.1; SB 152 to Mescinius Rufus):

*etsi mihi numquam dubium fuit quin tibi essem carissimus, tamen cottidie magis id perspicio exstatque id quod mihi ostenderas quibusdam litteris, hoc te studiosiorem in me colendo fore quam in provincia fuisses (etsi meo iudicio nihil ad tuum provinciale officium addi potest) quo liberior iudicium esse posset tuum.*

Although I never doubted that I was very dear to you, still I see it every day more plainly. This is the fulfillment of the promise you made in one of your letters, that you would be more zealous in your attentions to me than you had been in Cilicia (although in my judgment nothing could be added to the sense of duty you showed in the province) in proportion as your choice in friendship could be more freely exercised.<sup>68</sup>

P. Vatinius, in a letter to Cicero written in 45 B.C., uses the phrase *sicut soles* (as we have just seen, a pragmatic equivalent of *ut facis*) in a slightly different way in order to convey an earnestly polite tone (*Fam.* 5.9.1; SB 255): *qua re, si me, sicut soles, amas, suscipe meme totum.* ("Well then, if you love me as you usually do, take up me and my cause in our entirety.") By affecting here to take the conditional force of *si me amas* literally and then hastily reassuring Cicero that there is in fact no real doubt on the matter, Vatinius neatly reinvestigates the conventional politeness of *si me amas*.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, it is likely that this polite affectation had itself become something of a cliché among Cicero's correspondents, since Cicero seems to exploit it for wry effect in a letter to Tiro (*Fam.* 16.18.1; SB 219): *sed si me amas, quod quidem aut*

*facis aut perbelle simulas, quod tamen in modum procedit—sed, ut<ut> est, indulge valetudini tuae.* (“But if you love me—which either you do or very elegantly pretend to do, a course that works smoothly enough—well, however that stands, humor your health.”) Here the wit resides in unexpectedly varying the flourish of sophisticated facework that Vatinius (and presumably others) regularly tried to display through their insertion of phrases such as *sicut soles* or *quod certo facis*. Instead of including the usual earnest assurance that the addressee’s affection is not in doubt, Cicero here playfully suggests that Tiro is involved in a clever pretense of affection. Clearly, in a formal letter to a powerful peer, such a suggestion would be potentially insulting. But presumably Cicero feels confident that Tiro—who as trusted secretary would have been *au fait* with every nuance of aristocratic politeness—will be amused by this flippant overturning of conventions.

## Concluding Remarks

Redressive politeness played an essential role in social transactions that Roman aristocrats perceived to be especially face-threatening. As we have seen, although the reciprocal exchange of services was an established feature of Roman patronage, requesting favors was usually felt to involve some degree of intrusion and imposition. Indeed, the immense prestige and resources enjoyed by powerful patrons made them intrinsically intimidating figures.<sup>70</sup> Redressive politeness thus helped to ease the tension involved in such transactions. The frequency with which both patrons and clients had to make such requests naturally led to a degree of conventionalization in these strategies, and this conventionalization helped in turn to establish a familiar framework and appropriate linguistic register for their performance.

To refuse such requests could in turn be face-threatening to the petitioner. The reaction of Caecilius to Cicero’s rejection probably says more about the former’s ill-temper than Cicero’s skills at diplomacy; but in fact others could be rather grumpy as well. We learn from Cicero that several individuals in 54 B.C. were pestering him to ask Caesar for the same kind of favor and advancement bestowed on M. Curtius and Trebatius Testa (Q Fr. 3.1.10; SB 21). Cicero thus faced the dilemma of either annoying Caesar with further requests or refusing to help his friends. His solution is to resort to a ruse. Observing that his friends will not take refusal well (*negari a me non facile patiuntur*), he plans to make the desired requests, while also letting Caesar know (via Oppius) that he does not expect these requests to be fulfilled. Clearly the unpopularity engendered by refusals could be considerable, and Cicero did not always rely on urbane politeness to get him out of

awkward situations. Nevertheless, we have seen that various strategies and formulaic phrases developed to help him negotiate these delicate matters. And, as we saw earlier, according to Cicero's brother at least, the grace and aplomb inherent in such courtesy could on occasion engender goodwill even among those whose requests were declined.

Finally, the extensive use of redressive politeness when giving advice is further evidence of the Roman aristocrat's preoccupation with status and hierarchy. The tactful grandee made sure that he did not appear to lay claim to the superior role in a relationship by blithely dispensing words of wisdom. Indeed, this desire not to appear presumptuous or arrogant extended even to less formal situations, where phrases such as *ut facis* were regularly used to mitigate more casual requests. Nevertheless, as Pompey's letters show, not every aristocrat strove so hard to accommodate his acquaintances' concern with their own rank and prestige. Cicero's courtesy is thus typical only to a degree. It represents the stylistic choice of a subgroup within the elite who placed a premium on polite manners. In the next chapter, I examine a number of instances where these manners are deliberately discarded by Cicero's correspondents at moments of conflict. As we shall see, such situations required from Cicero a rather different approach to interpersonal negotiation.

# 4

## Politeness in Epistolary Conflict

So far, our discussions have focused on the use of epistolary politeness to ease tension and promote cooperation between Roman aristocrats. As we have seen, much of the conventional language of friendship relies on the mutual maintenance of polite fictions—a kind of temporary social contract that allows relationships to run smoothly. But, as we might expect, on occasions such contracts could break down. At times, conflicts arose between Cicero and his correspondents that could not be papered over with the pretense of goodwill. The present chapter considers the language and strategies employed by Cicero at these moments of confrontation. In particular, we shall examine the extent to which potentially abrasive encounters were conducted within a framework of polite manners. What language did Cicero use when he needed to challenge the views of his correspondents? And how strident could he be when asserting his own position or expressing his displeasure? We have already seen that Pompey at times is prepared to adopt a rather querulous and imperious manner with his correspondents. In general, Cicero seems to have followed rather different interactional principles.

The topic of linguistic propriety in confrontational situations does not seem to have stimulated a great deal of theorizing among Roman writers. Rhetoricians developed classifications of insult for use in oratorical invective;<sup>1</sup> but such invective was usually employed only in public contexts and as a last resort, once relations had deteriorated beyond immediate repair. The disputes that arise in Cicero's correspondence are rather different in

nature. They often involve relatively minor disagreements that call for some negotiation between the parties involved. These spats sometimes have the potential to develop into more serious schisms, but the language deployed usually steers clear of actual invective. Nevertheless, such disputes were not always conducted away from the view of others. The semipublic nature of much letter-writing in aristocratic society ensured that numerous acquaintances could be privy to a man's epistolary tussles and wranglings with those around him.<sup>2</sup>

Cicero does in fact offer some rudimentary guidelines regarding conflict-management in Book 1 of *De Officiis*. These are explicitly acknowledged to be breaking new ground (*Off.* 1.132): rhetoricians (he claims) have set down principles of decorum for oratorical speech, but none exist for informal conversation (*sermones*). Various contexts are imagined: small social gatherings (*in circulis*), intellectual debates (*disputationes*), meetings with friends and acquaintances (*congressiones familiarium*) and even dinner parties (*etiam convivio*). Clearly the fit with epistolary communication is not exact; but, as we saw in our introductory chapter, on occasions the social business transacted in face-to-face contexts had to be conducted instead by letter. Some of Cicero's guidelines then may be relevant to the disputes that we see played out in his correspondence.

These precepts in *De Officiis* form part of a wider discussion of proper comportment, and one of Cicero's main concerns is that the aristocrat should avoid emotionally unrestrained behavior.<sup>3</sup> Conversation should therefore be free from passionate outbursts (*Off.* 1.136): *sic eiusmodi motibus sermo debet vacare, ne aut ira exsistat aut cupiditas aliqua*.... ("So our conversation ought to be free from such emotions. Let there be no exhibition of anger or inordinate desire....") At the same time, however, he acknowledges that reprimands (*obiurgationes*) and reproofs (*castigationes*) of others are sometimes necessary (*Off.* 1.136–37):

*obiurgationes etiam nonnumquam incidunt necessariae, in quibus utendum est fortasse et vocis contentione maiore et verborum gravitate acriore, id agendum etiam, ut ea facere videamur irati. sed ut ad urendum et secandum, sic ad hoc genus castigandi raro invitique veniemus, nec umquam nisi necessario, si nulla reperietur alia medicina; sed tamen ira procul absit, cum qua nihil recte fieri, nihil considerare potest. magnam autem partem clementi castigatione licet uti, gravitate tamen adiuncta, ut et severitas adhibeatur et contumelia repellatur... rectum est autem etiam in illis contentionibus quae cum inimicissimis fiunt, etiamsi nobis indigna audiamus, tamen gravitatem retinere, iracundiam pellere.*

Sometimes it happens that reprimands too are required. On such occasions we should perhaps use a more emphatic tone of voice and more forceful, severe language, and even assume the appearance of being angry as we do so. But we shall only have recourse to this sort of censure, as we do to cautery and amputation, rarely and reluctantly—never at all unless it is unavoidable and no other remedy can be found. Even so, anger should be kept at a distance, since nothing can be done correctly or judiciously when we are in the grips of anger. In most cases, however, we may employ a censure that is mild yet serious in manner, so that severity is shown but offensive language avoided.... Indeed, the right course, even in the differences that arise with our bitterest enemies, is to maintain our dignity and to repress our anger, even if we hear said against us insulting remarks.

The reference in the final sentence to enemies (*inimicissimis*) suggests that these guidelines apply, in part at least, to an aristocrat's dealings with powerful political rivals (one did not engage in *inimicitiae* with nonentities). Cicero is not just writing about domestic disputes within the immediate household. The most dominant theme in the passage is that of restraint. One has recourse to this kind of language only reluctantly (*raro invitique*); one errs on the side of mildness (*clementi castigationi*); and one eschews abuse (*contumelia*) and anger (*ira / iracundia*). This concern with anger reflects in part the philosophical orientation of the treatise: the wise, well-bred man will not fall prey to his emotions.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, restraint is linked also to the aristocrat's *gravitas*. Intemperate ranting risks undermining the grandee's impressiveness and credibility in the eyes of others (note the concern to *gravitatem retinere*).<sup>5</sup> To this more pragmatic concern is added the frank acknowledgment that *appearing* angry can also be advantageous (*id agendum etiam, ut ea facere videamur irati*). Feigning rage has the potential to intimidate and persuade.<sup>6</sup>

It is not surprising, however, to find that rather different principles seem to have been followed in the cut-and-thrust of actual political conflicts. An instructive example appears in a letter to Lentulus Spinther in which Cicero gives an account of his recent clashes with Marcus Crassus (*Fam.* 1.9.20; SB 20):

*cognosce de Crasso: ego, cum mihi cum illo magna iam gratia esset, quod eius omnis gravissimas iniurias communis concordiae causa voluntaria quadam oblivione contemneram, repentinam eius defensionem Gabini, quem proximis superioribus diebus acerrime oppugnasset, tamen, si sine ulla mea contumelia suscepisset, tulissem. sed*

*cum me disputantem, non lacessentem, laesisset, exarsi non solum praesenti, credo, iracundia (nam ea tam vehemens fortasse non fuisset) sed cum inclusum illud odium multarum eius in me iniuriarum, quod ego effudisse me omne arbitrabar, residuum tamen insciente me fuisset, omne repente apparuit.*

To turn now to Crassus. I was on very good terms with him, having in the interests of general harmony expunged by what I might call a deliberate act of oblivion all the grave wrongs he had done me. So I would have put up with his sudden defense of Gabinius, whom he had attacked on the days immediately preceding, if he had gone about the task without abusing me. But when I took issue with him without any kind of provocative remarks, he insulted me. I flared up. It was not, I think, just the anger of the moment, which would not perhaps have been so violent, but my suppressed resentment at the many injuries he had done me. I thought I had dissipated all that, but a residue was still there without my being aware of it, and now it all suddenly came to the surface.

The account as a whole has a tendentious slant, as Cicero sets out to justify the twists and turns of his political actions in recent months.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, his depiction of events is instructive. Most tellingly, perhaps, he admits that his reaction to Crassus' behavior was fuelled by anger (*iracundia*; cf. *exarsi*). Certainly, Cicero is aware that the vehemence and extent of this anger was questionable; but his repeated references to Crassus' *iniuriae* (*gravissimas iniurias, multarum iniuriarum*) try to present it as an appropriate and righteous anger. Crucially, the basic justice of his retaliation is not in doubt. In this respect, Cicero's perspective is what we might call a traditional aristocratic, rather than philosophical, one.

His account also highlights what seems to have been a basic principle governing personal confrontation in the senate. Vigorous exchanges of opposing views were only to be expected in such a venue, and Cicero represents forceful debate as entirely acceptable. With the phrase *me disputantem* he implies that he had engaged in a robust but civil discussion of the issues at hand. Crassus, however, had made things personal. Although his initial remarks had been expressed sharply but appropriately (*acerrime*), he soon veered into the realm of personal abuse (*contumelia*). The result is depicted as a physical attack (note the phrase *cum... laesisset*). A free and frank exchange of views is perfectly acceptable, but assaults on one's character and standing are not.

We find similar principles articulated by Cicero at *Pro Caelio* 21, as he discusses the prosecution's motives for undertaking the case.<sup>8</sup> Although there is

an element of condescension in these remarks, Cicero's main argument (i.e., that the *real* figures behind the prosecution are acting maliciously) requires them to be taken at face value (*Cael.* 21): *neque id ego dico, ut invidiosum sit in eos, quibus gloriosum etiam hoc esse debet. funguntur officio, defendunt suos, faciunt quod viri fortissimi solent: laesi dolent, irati efferuntur, pugnant lacessiti*. ("And I do not say this to bring discredit on the prosecutors, who ought even to feel some pride in their actions. They are doing their duty, they are defending their friends, they are behaving as men of spirit usually act: when injured they feel aggrieved, when angered they get carried away, when challenged they fight.") According to this formulation, it is quite appropriate to be upset when attacked and wounded (*laesi*), and quite appropriate also to get angry (*irati*) and strike back (*pugnant*). Indeed, one's manliness is judged partly on the way one reacts to such situations (*quod viri fortissimi solent*). As Robert Kaster has demonstrated, there are limits to the forbearance that a Roman male is expected to show.<sup>9</sup>

When it comes to practical politics, then, Cicero seems to have expected disagreement and conflict to be handled in a civil and restrained manner whenever possible, with insults and abuse generally avoided. But in the face of personal insult, a vigorous response was perfectly appropriate, provided that it was proportionate to the initial injury. The following discussion considers to what extent (if at all) these principles played a part in Cicero's approach to epistolary conflict. Its main focus will be his correspondence with Appius Claudius Pulcher between 51 and 50 B.C. (preserved in Book 3 of *Ad Familiares*). These letters demonstrate a fascinating range of linguistic tone, as the two men struggle to negotiate their way through various contentious issues (unfortunately only Cicero's side of the correspondence is preserved). But we shall also examine several other instances where Cicero comes into conflict with senatorial acquaintances: a dispute at the start of 62 with Metellus Celer; a querulous letter of introduction written to C. Antonius Hybrida toward the end of the same year; and a spat with T. Fadius, probably around 49 B.C.

## Cicero and Appius Claudius Pulcher

Cicero's relationship with Appius Claudius Pulcher was a complicated one.<sup>10</sup> Appius was the brother of Cicero's enemy, Publius Clodius, whose attacks on the orator in the early fifties he had assisted.<sup>11</sup> He was also an ambitious and successful politician in his own right, gaining the consulship in 54 B.C. and having a reputation for a certain brazenness of character.<sup>12</sup> By the time of his consulship, however, he and Cicero had taken steps toward a reconciliation,



effected primarily through the agency of Pompey (Appius' daughter had married Pompey's son).<sup>13</sup> News of their friendly association seems to have been greeted with some skepticism by onlookers (*Fam.* 3.10.8–9; SB 73), but it is clear from *Fam.* 3.1 (SB 64), written at the end of 53 B.C. (or the start of 52 B.C.), that both men were working hard to try to forge a working relationship, despite their differences.<sup>14</sup> Appius, as provincial governor in Cilicia, had evidently already sent Cicero two letters, at least one of which was written in a punctiliously friendly style, being described by Cicero (*Fam.* 3.1.2) as *plenas et amoris et offici* ("full both of affection and a sense of duty"). We should not follow Constans, however, in concluding that such language indicates an easy, happy relationship.<sup>15</sup> As we have seen, such assertions of *amor* were entirely conventional in aristocratic correspondence and commonly used as a strategy of affiliative politeness. Indeed, the impression emerges that their reconciliation at this stage was relatively fragile. Cicero reciprocates with his own very formal, conventional expressions of regard toward Appius (*Fam.* 3.1.1; SB 64).<sup>16</sup> This formal cordiality, however, was put under considerable strain when Cicero was unexpectedly appointed to succeed Appius as governor of Cilicia in 51 B.C., and the two men were required to work together to ensure a smooth transition of power.

One delicate issue arose almost immediately. While still in Rome, Cicero and his supporters had tried to persuade the senate to authorize a levy of additional troops to be sent to Cilicia (and Syria) to strengthen the legions there. The senate, however, denied the request.<sup>17</sup> Cicero, now on his way to Cilicia, wrote to Appius and asked him to reconsider his plans to discharge from duty a considerable number of the troops currently serving with him (*Fam.* 3.2 and 3.3; SB 65 and 66). It is not clear how successful these overtures were. From *Fam.* 3.5.1 (SB 68) we can see that Appius later claimed to have done everything he could to help ease the transfer of power to Cicero, a claim that Cicero politely acknowledges. But, to judge from Cicero's later complaints about his lack of information regarding the military forces (*Fam.* 3.6.5; SB 69), Appius may not have been as accommodating in this regard as he could have been.<sup>18</sup>

Further difficulties arose when the two men tried to arrange a convenient place to meet as Appius departed the province. Such a meeting was not required by law, but no doubt in many cases this kind of rendezvous helped to formalize the transfer of official responsibilities.<sup>19</sup> It could also function as a public show of courtesy and respect between two prestigious politicians. On his journey from Greece to Ephesus Cicero was informed by one of Appius' acquaintances (a certain L. Clodius) that the governor hoped to meet him in Laodicea, a town on the western border of the province (*Fam.* 3.6.2; SB 69). Cicero changed his travel plans accordingly and confirmed his new

itinerary by letter (*Fam.* 3.6.2). Before he arrived at Laodicea, however, he received a letter from Appius indicating that he was in fact leaving for Tarsus, a town toward the eastern end of the province (*Fam.* 3.6.4). Nevertheless, he expressed some hope of still being able to meet Cicero (*Fam.* 3.6.4: *tamen mihi non dubiam spem mei conveniendi adferebas*).

This change in plan by Appius provoked considerable comment from onlookers. The *lex Cornelia de maiestate* required him to depart from the province within thirty days of his successor's arrival, yet he was now allegedly conducting official business while the new governor was already on the doorstep.<sup>20</sup> Cicero sent Appius another letter (*Fam.* 3.5; SB 68) acknowledging the change in plan and letting him know his own itinerary in the hope of being able to arrange a meeting. He eventually entered the province on July 31, and then continued his journey from Laodicea into the heart of the province over the next few weeks.<sup>21</sup> During this time, however, he received no messages at all from Appius. Finally on August 29, having arrived at the town of Iconium and with the period allowed by the *lex Cornelia* almost expired, Cicero writes a frosty letter to Appius confronting him on the issue. Hunter describes it as "perhaps... the nearest approach to an unpleasant letter that Cicero ever brought himself to write."<sup>22</sup> As we shall see, Cicero in fact could be rather more acerbic at times; but certainly the letter is rather different in tone from those that we have examined so far.

Cicero begins with a straightforward assertion (*Fam.* 3.6.1; SB 69): *cum meum factum cum tuo comparo, etsi non magis mihi faveo in nostra amicitia tuenda quam tibi, tamen multo magis meo facto delector quam tuo*. ("When I compare my conduct with yours, for all my desire to give you no less credit than myself in the maintenance of our friendship, I feel much more satisfied with mine than with yours.") The absence of introductory facework here is striking, especially when contrasted with the elaborate social niceties presented in *Fam.* 3.4 (SB 67) and 3.5 (SB 68). This abrupt engagement with the matter at hand conveys well his impatience and frustration, although Cicero also takes care to depict himself as a man of reasoned judgment and restraint. The *etsi*-clause (*etsi... tibi*) suggests that he is reluctant to adopt a carping and critical attitude; and there is both facework and self-assertion in his casting of the sentence in a comparative form. He avoids explicitly describing Appius' actions as rude and unsatisfactory; but he also emphatically proclaims the appropriateness of his own (*meo facto delector*).

The swift account of events that follows reinforces this impression of restraint. Cicero presents his side of the story in a clear and measured tone, with details designed to show that his intention has been straightforward and friendly. He notes, for example, that Appius was kept well informed of his planned itinerary (*Fam.* 3.6.2; SB 69): *ad te statim mea manu scriptas*

*litteras misi, quas quidem ex tuis litteris intellexi satis mature ad te esse perlatas.* ("I immediately dispatched a letter to you in my own hand, and this in fact, as I gather from your own letter, reached you in quite good time.") And he repeats calmly and respectfully his belief in the correctness of his actions (*Fam.* 3.6.3; *SB* 69): *hoc ego meo facto valde delector; nihil enim potuit fieri amanti.* ("With this conduct of mine, I am very well satisfied; nothing could have been more affectionate.") At this point, however, he turns to address in more detail the shortcomings of Appius' own behavior (*Fam.* 3.6.3; *SB* 69):

*non modo ibi non fuisti ubi me quam primum videre posses sed eo discessisti quo ego te ne persequi quidem possem triginta diebus qui tibi ad <de>cedendum lege, ut opinor, Cornelia constituti essent.*

Not only did you fail to be where you could see me soonest, you withdrew where I could not even follow you within thirty days, that being, I believe, the period prescribed for your departure by the *lex Cornelia*.

The tone here is assertive yet not intemperate. Indeed, the insertion of *ut opinor* performs a particularly delicate piece of facework. Through this pretended vagueness Cicero suggests that he is not fully conversant with the technical details of the *lex Cornelia*, and so, by implication, not especially interested in pursuing the legal implications of Appius' actions. Nevertheless, by mentioning the law, Cicero gently reminds Appius that there are constitutional issues at stake here, and that he is aware of them. This display of restraint continues in the following sentence (*Fam.* 3.6.3; *SB* 69): *ut tuum factum <iis> qui quo animo inter nos simus ignorent alieni hominis, ut levissime dicam, et fugientis congressum, meum vero coniunctissimi et amicissimi esse videatur.* ("Those who do not know our mutual sentiments might well regard your conduct as that of someone with whom I was unacquainted (to use no harsher word), and who was avoiding a meeting, whereas mine would appear that of the closest of friends.") Cicero's inclusion here of the phrase *ut levissime dicam* draws attention to his reluctance to criticize Appius, while again making an assertive claim regarding his own actions (he for his part has behaved most cooperatively).

Cicero continues to strike a judiciously balanced tone as he mentions rumors claiming that Appius has been conducting official business in recent weeks (*Fam.* 3.6.4; *SB* 69):

*cum interea, credo equidem, malevoli homines (late enim patet hoc vitium et est in multis), sed tamen probabilem materiem nacti sermonis,*

*ignari meae constantiae conabantur alienare a te voluntatem meam; qui te forum Tarsi agere, statuere multa, decernere, iudicare dicerent, cum posses iam suspicari tibi esse successum, quae ne ab iis quidem fieri solerent qui brevi tempore sibi succedi putarent.*

Meanwhile certain malicious individuals, in my view at least (it's a widespread flaw, present in many people), finding nevertheless a plausible theme for talk, tried to turn my mind against you, unaware of the constancy of my character. They said you were holding assizes in Tarsus, making many administrative decisions, issuing decrees, passing judgments, even though you already had reason to think that your successor had arrived—unusual procedure even when a governor expects to be superseded within a short time.

Cicero's representation of these accusations as mere rumor helps to render them less direct and confrontational. Indeed, he presents his correspondent with a ready-made out: Appius can now deny the truth of these reports without challenging Cicero's own credibility. At the same time, however, Cicero succeeds in signaling the potential gravity of Appius' actions.<sup>23</sup>

At this point, Cicero changes tack and urbanely affects to view the whole situation from a positive perspective. He claims that he would in fact readily welcome any reduction in his responsibilities as governor (*Fam.* 3.6.5; SB 69):

*horum ego sermone non movebar. quin etiam, credas mi velim, si quid tu ageres, levare me putabam molestia et ex annua provincia, quae mihi longa videretur, prope iam undecim mensuum provinciam factam esse gaudebam, si absenti mihi unius mensis labor detractus esset.*

I was not influenced by the talk of these men. Indeed—and I'd like you to believe me on this matter—I regarded any such action on your part as relieving me of trouble, and I was delighted that my year of office, which seems to me all too long, had been reduced almost to eleven months, if a month's work has been taken off my hands in my absence.

Again, Cicero presents himself as a reasonable man, preferring to save Appius' face in an elegantly diplomatic fashion rather than pursue the point.<sup>24</sup> This restraint helps to endow the complaint that follows with a certain moral authority (*Fam.* 3.6.5; SB 69): *illud, vere dicam, me movet, in tanta militum paucitate abesse tris cohortis, quae sint plenissimae, nec me scire ubi sint.* ("But I shall state frankly that I was disturbed by this: that, from so small a force of

troops, three cohorts, those indeed the most nearly up to strength, are missing and that I have no idea where they are.") Cicero shows himself to be generally easygoing when it is a case of his own personal convenience; but he draws the line at matters of national security.

He continues his complaints with a further carefully contrived combination of politeness and remonstrance (*Fam.* 3.6.5):

*molestissime autem fero quod te ubi visurus sim nescio; eoque ad te tardius scripsi quod cottidie te ipsum expectabam, cum interea ne litteras quidem ullas accepi quae me docerent quid ageres aut ubi te visurus essem. itaque virum fortem mihi in primis probatum, D. Antonium, praefectum evocatorum, misi ad te, cui si tibi videretur, cohortis traderes, ut, dum tempus anni esset idoneum, aliquid negoti gerere possem. in quo tuo consilio ut me sperare esse usurum et amicitia nostra et litterae tuae fecerant, quod ne nunc quidem despero. sed plane quando aut ubi te visurus sim, nisi ad me scripseris, ne suspicari quidem possum.*

What troubles me most, however, is not knowing where I shall see you. That is why I have been slow in writing, since I have been expecting you in person from day to day. Meanwhile I have not even had a letter to tell me what you are doing or where I am to see you. I am therefore sending to you Prefect of Reserves D. Antonius, a gallant officer, one of the best I have, to take over the cohorts, if you have no objection, so that I can get something done before the season is over. Our friendship and your letter had led me to hope that I should have the benefits of your advice in that respect, nor have I given up hoping even now. But unless you write to me when and where I am to see you, I am quite unable even to make a guess.

Cicero offers a show of respect here with the deferential phrase *si tibi videretur*, and he suggests that he is eager to see Appius. But he also emphasizes the extent of Appius' poor communication: not only has the man not arrived in person; he has not even bothered to send a letter. Moreover, while from one point of view his remark *quod ne nunc quidem despero* conveys an optimistic and positive attitude to their relationship, there is a sharp edge too in its implication that Cicero has in fact good reason to despair of Appius' goodwill toward him. This sense of exasperation is stressed further in his final remarks, as Cicero squarely places the blame for this lack of information on Appius. In particular the further repetition of *ne...quidem* (in *ne suspicari quidem possum*), combined with the intensification of *plane*, imparts

to his comments an air of frustration and urgency; and yet there is nothing inappropriately surly in his phrasing.

Cicero concludes the letter by outlining his intended movements in the days to come, ostensibly with the helpful aim of allowing the two of them to arrange a satisfactory rendezvous (*Fam.* 3.6.6; SB 69):

*et ut habere rationem possis quo loco me salva lege Cornelia convenias, ego in provinciam veni prid. Kal. Sext., iter in Ciliciam facio per Cappadociam, castra movi ab Iconio prid. Kal. Sept. nunc tu et ex diebus et ex ratione itineris, si putabis me esse conveniendum, constitues quo loco id commodissime fieri possit et quo die.*

And to enable you to judge where you can meet me without breach of the *lex Cornelia*, I entered the province on July 31, am travelling to Cilicia through Cappadocia, and am breaking camp near Iconium on August 29. You will now decide on the basis of dates and route where and on what day you can most conveniently meet me, if you think a meeting with me is called for.

Cicero's earlier vagueness about the *lex Cornelia* is shown here to have been a polite pretense. He now laconically observes that Appius may well indeed end up breaking the law. Again the remark is offset by other elements of facework: the decision whether to meet is left up to Appius (*si putabis me esse conveniendum*), as too the precise details of how the meeting is to be arranged. But his reference to the legal situation quietly warns Appius not to treat the matter (or Cicero himself) in a cavalier fashion.

As I have tried to illustrate in this analysis, Cicero confronts Appius in a way that is both assertive and respectful. He shows restraint (and to this extent follows the guidelines set forth in *De Officiis*); but he also expects his own *dignitas* to be properly acknowledged. He strikes an urbane balance between politeness and pugnacity, and in this respect the letter represents an excellent example of civil remonstrance or "friendly disagreement."<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, however, his wrangling with Appius did not end here.

Late in the evening of September 1, Cicero received news that Appius would be at Iconium before dawn (*Fam.* 3.7.4; SB 71). Although Cicero was now on the road with his army, he sent men to try to discover Appius' exact position and route in the hope of arranging a meeting. When this was unsuccessful and it was reported that Appius had already travelled past the camp at Iconium, Cicero himself hurried back to try to get to see him (*Fam.* 3.7.4: *confestim Iconium veni*). It is not in fact certain whether a meeting actually took place.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the case, the incident as a whole certainly contributed

to a heightened tension between the men, and a couple of weeks later Appius wrote a letter to Cicero containing numerous complaints.<sup>27</sup>

Appius objected in particular to Cicero's new policy of restricting the funds to be spent on sending embassies from Cilicia to Rome. This policy had a direct relevance to Appius, since he was apparently expecting a number of delegates from Cilician cities to be arriving in Rome in order to sing his praises in the senate.<sup>28</sup> These encomia would presumably enhance his chances of being awarded a triumph (as well as counteract attacks from political enemies). Appius was also annoyed at reports that Cicero had been critical of him at recent meetings with provincials in Cilicia.<sup>29</sup>

These complaints sharpen the conflict between the two men. Cicero is evidently aggrieved by these criticisms and strikes back with a letter significantly more strident in tone. In particular he employs a series of rhetorical questions to challenge each of Appius' points directly. Thus at *Fam.* 3.8.2 he asks: *quid a me fieri potuit aut elegantius aut iustius...*? ("How could I have acted with greater delicacy or fairness...?"); at *Fam.* 3.8.3: *quid enim reprehendi potest?* ("What is there to censure?"); and at *Fam.* 3.8.4 he explicitly characterizes Appius' claims as ludicrous (*irridendum*), and expostulates: *quid enim erat quod me persequerentur in castra Taurumve transirent...*? ("Why should they have to follow me to my camps or to cross the Taurus...?"). In each case, these questions are followed by a measured explanation of his actions; but their rhetorical form is emphatic. We get the sense of a raised voice, tense with indignation.<sup>30</sup>

Cicero also takes Appius to task for basing his criticisms on the gossip of ill-wishers. He mentions the point in his opening paragraph, and in section 5 he admonishes Appius for being so ready to believe these reports (*Fam.* 3.8.5; SB 70): *tu, <si> istius modi sermones ad te delati de me sunt, non debuisti credere; si autem hoc genere delectaris, ut quae tibi in mentem veniant aliis attribuas, genus sermonis inducis in amicitiam minime liberale.* ("If such talk about me was brought before you by others, you should not have believed it. If, on the other hand, you favor the practice of attributing to others the thoughts that enter your own mind, you introduce into friendship a far from honorable mode of conversation.") Cicero's didactic manner here is striking. We saw in the previous chapter that, in neutral circumstances, Roman aristocrats were generally wary about offering advice to their peers. In this situation, however, Cicero lectures Appius on appropriate behavior (note especially the verb *debuisti*). Indeed, he goes on to adopt the pose of professor of etiquette (*Fam.* 3.8.5–6; SB 70):

*qua re potes doctissimis hominibus auctoribus, quorum sunt de amicitia gerenda praeclarissime scripti libri, genus hoc totum orationis tollere,*

*'disputabant, ego contra disserebam; dicebant, ego negabam.'*...*non dicam plura, ne in quo te obiurgem id ipsum videar imitari; illud dicam ut sentio: si ista quae alios loqui dicis ipse sentis, tua summa culpa est; sin autem alii tecum haec loquuntur, tua tamen, quod audis, culpa non nulla est.*

So, following the advice of learned men who have written excellent books on the conduct of friendship, you can dismiss the whole line of language—'they contended...*I* argued to the contrary,' 'they said...*I* denied it.'...*I* will not continue, or *I* might seem to be following your example in the very point on which *I* am reproaching you. One thing *I* will say as *I* think: if the sayings you attribute to others are your own sentiments, you are very much to blame; but if others do say such things to you, you are still in some degree to blame for listening.

The vocabulary of admonishment continues here (*potes... tollere, tua summa culpa est, tua... culpa non nulla est*), with little attempt to soften it. Nevertheless Cicero also cleverly claims a measure of self-restraint (*non dicam plura* etc.). Moreover the sphere of this self-assertion is carefully chosen. Cicero criticizes Appius with regard to the relatively minor matter of his social manners; he avoids taking him to task over potentially graver issues, such as his actions at Tarsus or his treatment of the provincials. This tactic allows Cicero to project a self-important and dignified air without bringing any really serious accusations against Appius. He criticizes the man's civility, not his actual actions as governor. Indeed, in sections 7 and 8, he goes out of his way to assure Appius that any differences in his own administration of the province should not be interpreted as a criticism of Appius' previous policies (*Fam.* 3.8.7–8):

*sin autem quem mea instituta in provincia non delectant et quadam dissimilitudine institutorum meorum ac tuorum laedi se putat, cum uterque nostrum recte fecerit sed non idem uterque secutus sit, hunc ego amicum habere non curo. liberalitas tua ut hominis nobilissimi latius in provincia patuit. nostra si angustior... non debent mirari homines, cum et natura semper ad largiendum ex alieno fuerim restrictior et temporibus, quibus alii moventur, isdem ego movear, 'me<d> esse acerbum sibi ut<i> sim dulcis mihi.'*

If, however, anyone is dissatisfied with my administration here and considers himself injured by a certain dissimilarity between my administration and yours, the fact being that both of us have acted properly but on different principles, then *I* do not care to have such



a man as a friend. Your generosity as a great nobleman was more open-handed here than mine. If mine has been rather more constrained... people should not be surprised that, since I have always been naturally rather conservative in generosity at other people's expense and am influenced by the same temporary conditions as influence others, "I am sour to them in order to be sweet to myself."

Cicero is referring primarily here to the tight rein that he has kept on his staff's expenses as they made their way through the province (and about which he writes with some pride in his letters to Atticus).<sup>31</sup> By insisting that his staff strictly follow the official guidelines, Cicero was able to lighten significantly the financial burden imposed on the provincials. Because this policy could easily cast Appius' earlier conduct in a negative light, Cicero claims that Appius' approach was in fact simply a natural consequence of his sense of generosity (*liberalitas*), a characteristic expected in a man from a well-established family (*hominis nobilissimi*). As he does so, Cicero self-effacingly admits to a certain stinginess on his part and his own lack of *nobilitas*. This is clearly an attempt to defuse what was something of an awkward issue, and one on which, if he had wanted to, Cicero could have taken a far loftier and more idealistic stance. He prefers, however, as a gesture of goodwill toward Appius, to leave his principles (and strict logic) to one side, and claim that both of their policies can in fact be regarded as proper (*cum uterque nostrum recte fecerit*).<sup>32</sup>

Despite this diplomatic gesture, Cicero's strident rhetorical questions and self-righteous, didactic manner strike a more confrontational pose than we have seen previously. It is unfortunate, however, that we cannot judge for ourselves how provocative Appius' own tone had been. Cicero characterizes the man's manner in general during this period as rather carping and critical, although his remarks to Atticus on the matter are themselves filtered through the lens of politeness (*Att. 6.1.2; SB 115*): *Appius enim ad me ex itinere bis terve ὑπομεμψιόρους litteras miserat quod quaedam a se constituta rescinderem*. ("For Appius sent me two or three rather querulous letters on the way home, blaming me for rescinding some of his ordinances.")<sup>33</sup> And yet it is clear that Appius did in fact include a number of formal courtesies in the letter that prompts Cicero's strident reply: he made an effort to inform Cicero of the latest events in Rome (*Fam. 3.8.9: de rebus urbanis quod me certiore fecisti, cum per se mihi gratum fuit*); he offered to carry out Cicero's minor requests (*Fam. 3.8.9: significasti tibi omnia mea mandata curae fore*); and he asked to be informed in turn about affairs in the province, especially the danger posed by the Parthians (*Fam. 3.8.10: de nostris rebus quod scire*

*vis.... de Parthis quod quaeris...*).<sup>34</sup> Evidently he had not indulged in an unmitigated rant. His criticisms of Cicero's actions, however acerbic, were presented within a larger framework of stiff civility. To this extent, Appius too had endeavored to uphold certain social niceties. There evidently was an expectation that their epistolary disputes maintain a degree of propriety. Indeed, as we saw in chapter 1, Appius was well versed in the polite courtesies of aristocratic manners, and Cicero in a later letter refers in complimentary fashion to the man's *urbanitas*.<sup>35</sup> It is also clear, however, that Cicero feels the need to assert himself. He will not let disparaging comments about his behavior pass unchallenged.

The wrangling between the two men escalated yet further when Cicero received another dyspeptic (and lengthy) letter from Appius around February 11, 50 B.C.<sup>36</sup> Cicero claims that it contained harsh language and utterly unfair accusations against him, although once again, exactly how Appius phrased these complaints is now lost to us.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, they were provocative enough to draw from Cicero an even more belligerent response.

This belligerence is conveyed most obviously through Cicero's exclamations in sections 3 and 4. If rhetorical questions suggest a raised voice, exclamations convey a sense of animated outrage. The tone is also more sarcastic and scoffing: note *quasi!* in section 3 and *scilicet* in section 4. This indignant incredulity reaches a climax via a succession of clauses that ostensibly praise Appius, but which in fact serve only to emphasize the gauche nature of his behavior (*Fam.* 3.75; SB 71): *quaeso, etiamne tu has ineptias, homo mea sententia summa prudentia, multa etiam doctrina, plurimo rerum usu, addo urbanitatem, quae est virtus, ut Stoici rectissime putant?* ("Really! These absurdities from you—a man, in my opinion, of excellent sound sense, much learning too, great knowledge of the world, and, let me add, urbanity, which the Stoics very rightly rank as a virtue!") Cicero's manner is thus rather more bellicose and sarcastic than in *Fam.* 3.8.<sup>38</sup> Moreover in the course of countering Appius' criticisms he includes various censures of his own. He denies vigorously, for example, that his failure to go to meet Appius was a deliberate snub. Appius had evidently presented it as such in a sneering quip (*Fam.* 3.75; SB 71): *illud idem Pausanias dicebat te dixisse: 'quidni? Appius Lentulo, Lentulus Ampio processit obviam, Cicero Appio noluit.'* ("Pausanias also told me of the following remark of yours: 'Well, of course! Appius went to meet Lentulus, Lentulus went to meet Ampius; but Cicero go to meet Appius, oh no!'") Cicero here is accused of arrogance, although the real barb of the quip lies in its assumption that Cicero as a "new man" (*novus homo*) was under an even greater obligation to pay respect to the grand aristocrat Appius. It is thus assumed that the latter is inherently superior to the arriviste from Arpinum. Unable to ignore such

a jibe, Cicero undertakes to expose and reject its flawed premise in detail (*Fam.* 3.75; SB 71):

*cum ea consecutus nondum eram quae sunt hominum opinionibus amplissima, tamen ista vestra nomina numquam sum admiratus; viros eos qui ea vobis reliquissent magnos arbitrabar. postea vero quam ita et cepi et gessi maxima imperia ut mihi nihil neque ad honorem neque ad gloriam adquirendum putarem, superiorem quidem numquam, sed parem vobis me speravi esse factum.*

Even before I gained the distinctions which rank highest in people's eyes, I never held any particular admiration for those aristocratic names of yours; it was the men who bequeathed them to you that I considered great. But after I won and filled positions of the highest authority in such a fashion as to let me feel no need of additional rank or renown, I hoped that I had become the equal (never the superior) of you and your peers.

This is energetic self-assertion on a point about which Cicero was understandably sensitive. But although these remarks form a valid part of his rebuttal of Appius' quip, he finishes his excursus with a thrust of his own: *tu si aliter existimas, nihil errabis si paulo diligentius, ut quid sit εὐγένεια intellegas, Athenodorus, Sandonis filius, quid de his rebus dicat attenderitis.* ("If you think otherwise, you will not go wrong if you pay rather more attention to what Athenodorus, son of Sandon, has to say on these points—in order to understand the true meaning of *noblesse*.") This injunction to read Athenodorus is expressed in politely hedged terms: *nihil errabis si* is less assertive and admonitory than the use of a verb such as *debeo* would have been. Similarly, *paulo diligentius...attenderitis* is quietly understated. The essential point, however, is condescending. Cicero jabs back at Appius' complacent assumption of good breeding: this scion of a long-established aristocratic family does not in fact understand the true meaning of nobility.

Cicero also concludes the letter in a rather grumpy fashion. He begins by offering what appears to be some gracious affiliative facework (*Fam.* 3.76; SB 71): *sed ut ad rem redeam, me tibi non amicum modo verum etiam amicissimum existimes velim. profecto omnibus meis officiis efficiam ut ita esse vere possis iudicare.* ("But to come back to the point. I would like you to believe that I am not only your friend, but your very good friend. Certainly through all my services to you I shall enable you to decide that this is really so.") And yet he continues almost immediately with the insinuation that Appius is not in fact showing the appropriate reciprocity

in their relationship. Indeed, Cicero claims that he does not really need Appius' help anyway, and implies that the man is by nature an irritable "fault-finder" (*Fam.* 3.7.6; SB 71):

*tu autem si id agis, ut minus mea causa, dum ego absim, debere videaris quam ego tua laborarim, libero te ista cura; 'πάρ' ἔμοιγε καὶ ἄλλοι / οἱ κέ με τιμήσουσι, μάλιστα δὲ μητίετα Ζεὺς.' si autem natura es φιλαίτιος, illud non perficies, quo minus tua causa velim; hoc adsequere ut, quam in partem tu accipias, minus laborem.*

As for yourself, if your aim is not to appear bound to work for my interests while I am away as heartily as I worked for yours, why I hereby relieve you of that preoccupation—"Others stand by me / to do me grace, and before all wise Zeus." But if you are a fault-finder by nature, you will not make me any the less your well-wisher; all you will achieve is to leave me less concerned about your reactions.

The remarks seem uncharacteristically ill-tempered. Cicero almost petulantly tells Appius not to worry about supporting his interests and reveals in the phrase *si autem* etc. an unfamiliar sniping attitude.

The unusually pugnacious tone of these comments is in fact recognized by Cicero himself. He concludes the letter with an acknowledgment that his language is rather more blunt than he would normally use (*Fam.* 3.7.6; SB 71): *haec ad te scripsi liberius fretus conscientia officii mei benevolentiaeque, quam a me certo iudicio susceptam, quoad tu voles, conservabo.* ("I have written to you rather frankly, confident in the knowledge of my own sense of duty and goodwill, an attitude which, as I have adopted it of deliberate choice, I shall maintain so long as *you* wish.") It is significant, however, that he makes no effort to soften their tone any further. These remarks then should probably be viewed as a deliberate and calculated show of aggression as the quarrel between the two men intensifies. As in his clash with Crassus discussed earlier, matters have progressed from a mere difference of opinion to a more personal tussle in which issues of rank and *dignitas* are at stake. Cicero's first inclination, as with Crassus, is toward assertive but civil remonstrance; but when pushed further, he will employ a more pugnacious manner to match that of his opponent. This pugnacity, as we have seen, exploits indignant rhetorical questions and exclamations, combined with sometimes sarcastic, acerbic observations. Yet, overall the manner is relatively restrained. It certainly avoids crude insult (*contumelia*), and Cicero also makes the effort to include at times some quite subtle facework. Generally, then, the conflict remains within a polite framework, but Cicero

is still able to challenge forcefully any unjustified attacks on his character or behavior.

At this point, the two men were finally able to manufacture an uneasy truce. A few weeks later Cicero received a more affable and conciliatory letter from Appius, who had by now arrived back in Rome. To this, Cicero replies in a correspondingly benign manner.<sup>39</sup> We should not conclude, however, that Cicero's spirited letters had brought a chastened Appius to heel. Practical considerations may well have been a more important factor in his change of attitude.<sup>40</sup> Whatever the case, in their ensuing correspondence several attempts are made to ease the tensions caused by their spat. In *Fam.* 3.11, for example, Cicero attempts various forms of facework (*Fam.* 3.11.5; SB 74):

*stomachiosiores meas litteras quas dicas esse non intellego. bis ad te scripsi me purgans diligenter, te leviter accusans in eo quod de me cito credidisses. quod genus querelae mihi quidem videbatur esse amici; sin tibi displicet, non utar eo posthac. sed si, ut scribis, eae litterae non fuerunt disertae, scito meas non fuisse. ut enim Aristarchus Homeri versum negat quem non probat, sic tu (libet enim mihi iocari), quod disertum non erit, ne putaris meum.*

I am at a loss to know which letter of mine you mean when you refer to a 'rather irritable letter.' I wrote to you twice exculpating myself in detail and mildly criticizing you because you had been quick to believe what you heard about me. To me at least this type of complaint seemed to be the kind of thing typical of a friend. But if it displeases you, I shall not make use of it in future. But if the letter was, as you say, not 'well-expressed,' you may be sure I did not write it. Just as Aristarchus denies the authenticity of any Homeric line which he does not like, so I would ask (I like to joke around), that if you find any piece of writing not 'well-expressed,' not to believe I wrote it.

This passage reveals some urbane touches from both men in their attempts at reconciliation. Appius for his part is diplomatically understated in his choice of adjective: *stomachiosiores* allows Cicero to attribute his sharper comments to a passing bad mood (rather than an enduringly malicious character), and the comparative form implicitly stands in contrast to the more emphatic and accusatory *stomachosissimas*. Moreover with the phrase *non disertae* Appius archly focuses his criticism on style rather than content. He pretends to be more concerned with Cicero's linguistic expression than with the complaints themselves. Cicero in turn wittily invites Appius to extend this polite fiction: if his letter did contain any remarks that were poorly

expressed, Appius is to treat them as spurious. Indeed, his reference here to the Homeric commentator Aristarchus functions as a form of affiliative politeness through its nod to Appius' erudition.

Cicero also attempts to downplay the confrontational element of their previous correspondence by invoking the "friendship-permits-frankness" strategy discussed in the previous chapter (*quod genus querelae mihi quidem videbatur esse amici*). In this case, his use of the strategy seems rather half-hearted, as he quickly assures Appius that he will not use such language in the future. And Cicero tries to stress the essentially defensive orientation of his remarks (note the verb *purgo*) while minimizing their more aggressive element (*te leviter accusans*).<sup>41</sup> This facework no doubt played its part in helping to restore reasonable working relations between the men.<sup>42</sup>

Overall, then, Cicero observes a generally restrained manner in his epistolary conflicts with Appius. Indeed, both men include in their letters some elegantly polite touches in the course of their disputes. When Cicero is obliged on occasion to assert himself with a degree of force and vigor, he keeps well within the bounds of propriety and eschews insult and intemperate rudeness. It remains to be seen, however, how far this approach is typical. As our next example shows, some disagreements could take a rather different form.

## Cicero and Metellus Celer

The spirited exchange of letters between Cicero and Metellus Celer in January 62 B.C. is well known.<sup>43</sup> It represents the culmination of political tensions that had been growing for some time. Celer's *frater*, Metellus Nepos, had as tribune for 62 B.C. threatened Cicero with prosecution soon after the execution of the Catilinarian conspirators.<sup>44</sup> He had also prevented Cicero from speaking at length at a *contio* on the last day of his consulship in 63, and the wrangling between the two men continued into the first weeks of 62 B.C.<sup>45</sup> Celer, by contrast, as praetor in 63 B.C. and propaetor of Cisalpine Gaul in 62 B.C., was playing an active role in confronting Catiline's forces, and to this extent had a more functional working relationship with Cicero.<sup>46</sup> Recently, however, Celer had been informed of mocking comments that Cicero had (supposedly) made against him in the senate, and he complains too of Cicero's unfair attacks on Nepos (*Fam.* 5.1.1). Nepos in fact was now facing stiff opposition from other elements in the senate as well, and Celer claims to have adopted mourning garb in protest at his brother's insulting treatment.<sup>47</sup>

Celer's letter outlines these grievances with a bracing bluntness. After the briefest of formulaic greetings (*si vales, bene est*),<sup>48</sup> he curtly asserts (*Fam.* 5.1.1; SB 1): *existimaram pro mutuo inter nos animo et pro reconciliata gratia nec*

*absente<m umquam me abs te> ludibrio laesum iri nec Metellum fratrem ob dictum capite ac fortunis per te oppugnatum iri.* ("In view of our reciprocal sentiments and the restoration of our friendly relations I had not expected that I should ever be held up by you to offensive ridicule in my absence, or that my brother Metellus would be attacked at your instance in person or estate because of a phrase.") What Celer omits here is as important as what he includes. There is no attempt to convey respect for Cicero's position as ex-consul, and no redressive politeness to mitigate the letter's confrontational element. Instead Celer immediately launches into an accusation of vindictive behavior. Indeed, the phrasing *existimaram... nec... nec* conveys the haughty implication that Cicero has fallen below Celer's standards of behavior. He thus contrives to talk down to Cicero from a position of moral superiority—the very antithesis of polite aristocratic manners. Likewise, the phrases *pro mutuo inter nos animo* and *pro reconciliata gratia* invoke the fundamental Roman value of reciprocity between friends, and imply that Cicero has transgressed this basic ethical principle. Celer then continues with the claim that insufficient respect has been paid to his family's prestige (*Fam.* 5.1.1; SB 1):

*quem si parum pudor ipsius defendebat, debebat vel familiae nostrae dignitas vel meum studium erga vos remque publicam satis sublevare. nunc video illum circumventum, me desertum a quibus minime conveniebat.*

If his own honorable character did not suffice for his protection, the dignity of our family and my devotion on behalf of you and your friends and the commonwealth should have been support enough. Now I see that he is surrounded and I deserted, by those for whom such behavior was utterly inappropriate.

Celer's assertion of his family's *dignitas* is not objectionable in itself. As we have seen, Cicero himself at times has to make similar claims for respect in his letters to Appius. But in this case Celer's proud declaration goes hand-in-hand with explicit criticism of his correspondent. Through his use of *debebat* and *minime conveniebat* Celer sets himself up as moral arbiter and asserts that Cicero has failed to observe the proper responsibilities owed to friends and state.<sup>49</sup> These accusations are made starkly and directly, with no attempt at mitigating facework. Indeed, this gruff manner culminates in a warning (*Fam.* 5.1.2; SB 1): *quae quoniam nec ratione nec maiorum nostrum clementia administrastis, non erit mirandum si vos paenitebit.* ("Well, because you and your friends have managed this affair without the reason or forbearance of our ancestors, it should be no surprise if you all come to be sorry.") Cicero

(and his supporters in the senate) are now insultingly said to have shown a lack of *ratio* and *clementia*, and will have to suffer the consequences.<sup>50</sup> What exactly these will be is left deliberately vague, but the element of menace is unmistakable. Celer's sense of satisfaction at Cicero's prospective misfortune contrasts sharply with the expressions of goodwill that are regular features of polite aristocratic correspondence.<sup>51</sup>

The letter concludes with a direct attack on Cicero's character and a self-righteous assertion of Celer's own commitment to the state (*Fam.* 5.1.2): *te tam mobili in me meosque esse animo non sperabam. me interea nec domesticus dolor nec cuiusquam iniuria ab re publica abducat.* ("I did not expect to find your own disposition so fickle toward me and my family. In the meantime neither domestic unhappiness nor any man's ill-usage will turn me away from the commonwealth.") Given the seriousness with which Cicero himself took ethical responsibilities such as duty to friends and state, the suggestion that he is fickle (*mobilis*) must have proved especially galling;<sup>52</sup> so, too, the implication that Cicero's behavior could well harm the republic were Celer not such a patriotic and determined soul. It is precisely this kind of aggressive one-upmanship that the language of politeness strives to prevent. The very brevity of the letter too—just fifteen lines—functions as a rejection of Cicero's social importance. Celer conveys a distaste with having to deal with the man at all.<sup>53</sup> Most of the letter's sting, however, derives from its judgmental vocabulary (*existimaram, debebat, conveniebat, non sperabam*), through which Celer contrives to adopt the role of social superior scolding an underling for his disappointing behavior. For the "status warriors" of the Roman aristocracy this was a manner calculated to cause offense.<sup>54</sup>

Celer's letter, then, shows none of the concern for linguistic politeness that has been evident in most of the correspondence discussed so far. But where does it fit in with broader Roman views on conflict-management and appropriate language? Wiseman is emphatic in his condemnation of its arrogant manner.<sup>55</sup> Hoffer, by contrast, claims that the dispute remains "within the unstated bounds of polite friendship." Indeed, he treats the exchange as paradigmatic of the "friendly disagreements" that typified Late Republican politics.<sup>56</sup> Certainly, we must resist the assumption that Roman notions of appropriateness closely matched our own. As Hoffer notes, Celer depicts Cicero as behaving unethically and invokes the *iniuriae* that he and his brother have suffered at the orator's hands.<sup>57</sup> This, as we have seen, is the kind of rhetoric that Cicero himself employs regarding his clash with Crassus. Arguably, then, the situation had reached a stage beyond mild-mannered remonstrance. Roman aristocratic ethics called for vigorous retaliation against Cicero's assault on the brothers (note the metaphor in *laesum iri*).



But whether we should characterize the exchange as a “friendly” disagreement is a different matter. The letter’s language is certainly different from that (apparently) employed by Appius Claudius in his disputes with the orator. We seem here to be in rather different territory. Moreover, it is important not to judge the letter’s intent and manner on the basis of later events. To be sure, the relationship between Celer and Cicero survived this particular incident;<sup>58</sup> but things may have been very different if Nepos’ policy regarding Pompey had prevailed. The letter is perhaps better regarded as part of the family’s political rhetoric of the moment. One of its prime aims is to cast Cicero as villain. This is not the place then for soft-edged politeness. The letter is a calculated, aggressive strike that claims the moral high ground via the traditional ethics of retaliation against unfair injury.<sup>59</sup>

Cicero’s response is a similarly calculated and astute piece of political gamesmanship. To this example of haughty curtness he constructs a colossal reply of over one hundred and twenty lines. Its approach is in many respects rhetorical as Cicero painstakingly rebuts the various accusations against him and asserts in turn the appropriateness of his own actions.<sup>60</sup> But the letter also draws attention to its courtesy and restraint. Cicero presents himself as poised, assured, and dignified in the face of these brusque threats. He thus contrives to achieve a moral as well as a rhetorical supremacy.

The letter begins on the defensive, with Cicero claiming that his comments in the senate were not in fact intended to bring ridicule on Celer (*Fam.* 5.2.2; SB 2):

*hoc in sermone cum a me exponeretur quae mea exspectatio fuisset orationis tuae quantoque in errore versatus essem, visa est oratio non iniucunda, et mediocris quidam est risus consecutus, non in te sed magis in errorem meum et quod me abs te cupisse laudari aperte atque ingenue confitebar.*

When in the course of my remarks I explained how eagerly I had been looking forward to your speech and how utterly deceived I had been, my speech caused some amusement and a moderate amount of laughter ensued—not directed at you, but rather at my mistake, and because I was admitting openly and frankly that I had passionately wished to be praised by you.

This is probably a disingenuous version of events. It is easy enough to imagine Cicero in such a context engaging in sarcasm at Celer’s expense, feigning a desire to receive his commendation and pretending that this alone would set the seal on his achievements as consul.<sup>61</sup> And it is understandable

that Celer and his supporters would be annoyed by the sniggers such comments raised in this very public context. But Cicero here slyly exploits the ambiguity inherent in most forms of irony: he claims that his words were meant to be taken at face value, and that Celer's friends have misinterpreted the reason for the laughter that ensued. Although we may not necessarily believe this version of events, his claim is difficult to refute conclusively, and succeeds at least in casting some doubt over what actually transpired. Having gained this foothold, Cicero then goes on to propose a flattering polite fiction that he hopes will appease Celer (*Fam.* 5.2.2): *iam hoc non potest in te non honorifice esse dictum, me in clarissimis meis atque amplissimis rebus tamen aliquod testimonium tuae vocis habere voluisse*. ("Really there could be nothing but respect in my saying that at the very height of my glory I still desired some testimonial from *your* lips.")

Cicero moves on to firmer ground as he addresses the other criticisms that Celer has made against him, and his repeated use of *quod scribis* at the beginning of sections 3, 5, and 6 conveys a sense of vigorous and precise rebuttal. He addresses first the expectations of their relationship (*Fam.* 5.2.3; SB 2): *quod autem ita scribis, 'pro mutuo inter nos animo,' quid tu existimes esse in amicitia mutuum, nescio; equidem hoc arbitror, cum par voluntas accipitur et redditur*. ("As for your reference to 'our reciprocal sentiments,' I do not know how *you* define reciprocity in friendship. I conceive it to lie in goodwill equally received and returned.") The phrasing here is neatly double-edged: Cicero does not flatly assert that Celer's view of reciprocity is wrong, yet he manages to imply that Celer's criticism is valid only if he entertains some warped notion of the concept. Cicero then embarks on a direct refutation of the accusations against him, listing the various ways in which he has in fact helped Celer in recent months: he quickly transferred to Celer the consular province that was allotted to Cicero himself; he made many complimentary remarks about Celer in the senate and recorded them in a decree; and he made many favorable remarks in public assemblies too (*Fam.* 5.2.3). He caps the argument by throwing the accusation of a lack of reciprocity back at Celer (*Fam.* 5.2.4):

*postea vero quam profectus es, velim recordere quae ego de te in senatu egerim, quae in contionibus dixerim, quas ad te litteras miserim. quae cum omnia collegeris, tu ipse velim iudices satisne videatur his omnibus rebus tuus adventus, cum proxime Romam venisti, mutue respondisse.*

Then, after you left Rome, I would ask you to recollect my actions in the Senate with respect to you, my speeches at public meetings, and the letters I sent you. When you have put all this together, I would like you to judge for yourself whether your conduct on your arrival

when you most recently visited Rome adequately “reciprocated” mine at all these points.

The point is made decisively yet politely. Cicero merely asks Celer to reflect on the matter for himself and come to his own conclusion.<sup>62</sup> As in his letters to Appius, Cicero judiciously balances assertiveness with courteous respect. He goes on, for example, to magnanimously depict the complaints against him as a sign of Celer's affection for his brother (*Fam.* 5.2.6):

*primum hoc velim existimes, animum mihi istum tuum vehementer probari et fraternam plenam humanitatis ac pietatis voluntatem; deinde, si qua ego in re fratri tuo rei publicae causa restiterim, ut mihi ignoscas (tam enim sum amicus rei publicae quam qui maxime).*

Now in the first place I would ask you to believe that I strongly approve of your sentiment in that regard and of your brotherly feeling, brimming with a sense of consideration and duty. Secondly, if in any matter I have opposed your brother on behalf of the republic, I ask you to forgive me—for in my allegiance to the republic I call no man my superior.

The ostensibly deferential request for forgiveness (*ut mihi ignoscas*) has an ironic edge to it: nobody in fact should require permission to serve the state loyally. Indeed, Cicero here offers a neat riposte to Celer's claims to be a devoted servant of the *res publica*. Nobody (Cicero maintains) can match his own sense of duty to the state (*tam enim sum amicus rei publicae quam qui maxime*). This claim also allows him to de-personalize his clash with Nepos: his actions have been motivated (he asserts) by lofty concerns for the republic, not by any personal animosity toward Celer's brother. The point is an important one because a main aim of Celer's letter is to depict Cicero as petty and vindictive. Cicero responds by developing in some detail the image of himself as a reasonable and conciliatory man. He stresses that he took various steps to try to avoid direct conflict with Nepos, even asking Celer's wife to intercede on his behalf (*Fam.* 5.2.6), and sending mutual friends to negotiate with Nepos as events reached a critical point (*Fam.* 5.2.8).

This polite assertiveness in the face of considerable provocation allows Cicero to gain the moral high ground and endows his remarks with a sense of dignified, righteous grievance. Having established this *ethos*, he can then switch to a more acerbic and indignant tone (*Fam.* 5.2.8; SB 2):

*hominem gravem et civem egregium, qui, qua poena senatus consensu bonorum omnium eos adfecerat qui urbem incendere et magistratus ac*

*senatum trucidare, bellum maximum conflare voluissent, eadem dignum iudicaret eum qui curiam caede, urbem incendiis, Italiam bello liberasset!*

What a responsible individual, what an outstanding citizen he is, if he judges the man who saved the Senate from massacre, Rome from arson, and Italy from war, worthy of the same penalty as was inflicted by the Senate with the approval of all honest men on those who had planned to set fire to Rome, slaughter magistrates and Senate, and kindle a terrible conflict!

The sarcasm and clattering rhetoric of the sentence (note the exclamation and the irony in the adjectives *gravem* and *egregium*) introduce a heightened emotional intensity to the letter. The conciliatory opening sections are replaced now by more forceful self-assertion. Indeed, the indignation of his exclamation is followed quickly by an insistent rhetorical question as Cicero claims the right to self-defense (*Fam.* 5.2.8): *huius ego temeritati si virtute atque animo non restitsem, quis esset qui me in consulatu non casu potius existimaret quam consilio fortem fuisse?* ("If I had not stood firm against his reckless actions with courage and bravery, who would have believed that my bravery in the consulship was not a matter of chance rather than firm intention?") He then continues with moralizing vocabulary similar to that used by Celer himself (*Fam.* 5.2.9):

*haec si tu Metellum cogitare de me nescisti, debes existimare te maximis de rebus a fratre esse celatum; sin autem aliquid impertivit tibi sui consili, lenis a te et facilis existimari debeo qui nihil tecum de his ipsis rebus expostulem.... cognosce nunc humanitatem meam, si humanitas appellanda est in acerbissima iniuria remissio animi ac dissolutio.*

If you were unaware of Metellus' intentions toward me, you must recognize that your brother has kept you in the dark about matters of the highest consequence. On the other hand, if he told you something of his plans, you ought to appreciate how mild and easygoing I show myself in not remonstrating with you on this very subject.... Note now my forbearance—if that is the right word for laxity and weakness in the face of the most severe provocation.

Cicero here expounds on how Celer ought to be behaving (note the imperative *cognosce* and repeated use of *debeo*, both of which convey a didactic manner). Celer is not the only one who can give lectures on appropriate

behavior. At the same time, Cicero draws attention to the restraint that he is showing in the face of considerable provocation (note the words *lenis*, *facilis*, *humanitas*). He consolidates this image of himself as a man of magnanimity with a restatement of his main claims (*Fam.* 5.2.10):

*qua re non ego oppugnavi fratrem tuum, sed fratri tuo repugnavi; nec in te, ut scribis, animo fui mobili, sed ita stabili ut in mea erga te voluntate etiam desertus ab officiis tuis permanerem. atque hoc ipso tempore tibi paene minitanti nobis per litteras hoc rescribo atque respondeo: ego dolori tuo non solum ignosco sed summam etiam laudem tribuo.*

Thus I made no attack on your brother, but repelled *his* attack on me; and my disposition toward you has not been 'fickle.' Rather it has been so stable that I persisted in my good feelings toward you even when abandoned by dutiful services on your part. Even now, though you have written to me in almost menacing terms, this is the answer I have to make: I not only pardon your sense of grievance, I highly commend it.

In a clever (and to his correspondent, surely infuriating) move, Cicero calmly shrugs off Celer's threat. Far from being intimidated by it, he affects an admiration for its impassioned show of feeling, and he condescends to forgive Celer's *dolor*. The proud noble gets a dose of his own haughtiness.

Given Cicero's training in rhetoric, it is not surprising that he is able to overturn Celer's arguments so effectively. More striking is his decision not to respond in kind to Celer's curt and provocative language. He works hard to cultivate instead an image of himself as poised and restrained, yet able to resist staunchly this surly challenge from a powerful family. This civility under fire helps to define him as a man of sound and consistent character—an important image to project at a time when his opponents' rhetoric was depicting him as a bloodthirsty tyrant. To this extent his politeness again serves a political end. We shall explore this form of self-presentation further in the next chapter when we consider Antony's clashes with Brutus and Cassius in 44 B.C.

It would be rash, however, to generalize about Celer's typical epistolary manners on the basis of this one letter. In other contexts, he may well have made extensive use of the conventions that we have identified in the letters of his peers and acquaintances. Indeed, the brusqueness of his one extant letter does in fact find occasional parallel in Cicero's own correspondence. As our next two examples show, Cicero himself could on occasions employ a sharp, even rude tone when the situation demanded.

## Cicero and C. Antonius Hybrida

Cicero's only extant letter to C. Antonius Hybrida (*Fam.* 5.5; SB 5), written in December 62 B.C., undertakes the relatively perfunctory task of requesting support for Atticus' business interests overseas.<sup>63</sup> Atticus at this time was planning to travel to Macedonia where Antonius, Cicero's consular colleague of the previous year, was now governor.<sup>64</sup> Writing such a letter of introduction was a standard feature of aristocratic patronage. Cicero, however, takes the unusual step of including in it several sharp criticisms of Antonius' recent behavior toward him. Indeed, he seems to go out of his way to transform a potentially straightforward polite request into something abrasive and confrontational. The letter strikes a querulous tone at the very outset (*Fam.* 5.5.1; SB 5):

*etsi statueram nullas ad te litteras mittere nisi commendaticias (non quo eas intellegerem satis apud te valere sed ne iis qui me rogarent aliquid de nostra coniunctione imminutum esse ostenderem), tamen, cum T. Pomponius, homo omnium meorum in te studiorum et officiorum maxime conscius, tui cupidus, nostri amantissimus, ad te proficisceretur, aliquid mihi scribendum putavi, praesertim cum aliter ipsi Pomponio satis facere non possem.*

Although I had decided to write no letters to you except letters of recommendation—not that I had any reason to suppose that these carry any particular weight with you, but because I did not wish to show the persons who asked for them that our connection was less close than formerly—nevertheless, since T. Pomponius, a man who knows my devotion and friendly services on your behalf better than any man, and a man who is fondly disposed to you and a very affectionate friend of mine, is setting out to join you, I thought I ought to write a few lines, especially as Pomponius himself would be disappointed if I did not.

The sentence starts off promisingly enough. As we have seen, a typical strategy of redressive politeness is to apologize for intruding on a correspondent's time. From Cicero's opening words then we expect him to say that he has decided to send only letters of recommendation to Antonius because he wants to avoid troubling him. Instead, he frankly admits to reservations about sending even these, on the grounds that Antonius will in fact pay little attention to them.<sup>65</sup> The remark immediately signals Cicero's intention to dispense with the genteel fictions that often characterize such exchanges. He

notes that he is prepared to maintain the façade of their cordial relations as far as onlookers are concerned; but he is not going to pretend politely to Antonius himself that they are on good terms. This confrontational directness is not something that we have seen before.

This frosty tone is developed further as Cicero proceeds to criticize Antonius' ingratitude and ill-will (*Fam.* 5.5.2; SB 5):

*ego si abs te summa officia desiderem, mirum nemini videri debeat. omnia enim a me in te profecta sunt quae ad tuum commodum, quae ad honorem, quae ad dignitatem pertinerent. pro his rebus nullam mihi abs te relatam esse gratiam tu es optimus testis, contra etiam esse aliquid abs te profectum ex multis audivi.*

Nobody would be surprised if I were to expect great favors from you, for everything has been forthcoming on my side which might promote your interests, honor, and prestige. To the fact that I have received no service from you in return you are the best witness; that in some measure you have even shown an inclination to the contrary I have heard from many sources.

These criticisms are in fact similar to those made by Celer against Cicero himself. They also invert the polite conventions that a person making a request is supposed to employ. Usually the petitioner emphasizes the positive reciprocity that the two parties enjoy;<sup>66</sup> in this case, Cicero does precisely the opposite. Indeed, he goes on to add sarcastically (*Fam.* 5.5.2; SB 5): *nam comperisse me non audeo dicere, ne forte id ipsum verbum ponam quod abs te aiunt falso in me solere conferri.* ("I dare not say 'learned' in case I might be using the very word which they tell me you often bring up against me (untruly).") At this point, however, Cicero tempers his abrasiveness and professes an unwillingness to go into greater detail (*Fam.* 5.5.2): *sed ea quae ad me delata sunt malo te ex Pomponio, cui non minus molesta fuerunt, quam ex meis litteris cognoscere.* ("But I prefer that you hear of the stories which have reached me from Pomponius (who has been no less disturbed by them) rather than from a letter of mine.") This show of restraint is a device that we have seen in his letters to Appius Claudius and Metellus Celer, too. By drawing attention to his self-control, he can stake a claim to the moral high ground. Cicero depicts himself as upholding certain principles of decorum, despite Antonius' provocation. The next sentence follows a similar pattern. Cicero asserts the correctness of his own actions while ostentatiously eschewing explicit condemnation of Antonius' deeds (*Fam.* 5.5.2): *meus in te animus quam singulari officio fuerit, et senatus et populus Romanus testis est; tu quam*

*gratus erga me fueris ipse existimare potes, quantum mihi debeas ceteri existiment.* ("The Senate and People of Rome stand witness to the extraordinary sense of duty that has characterized my disposition toward you. Of your gratitude, you yourself can judge; of your debt to me let the rest of the world judge.") By allowing Antonius and others (*ceteri*) to pass their own judgment, Cicero spares his addressee potentially offensive or humiliating details, while implying that such details nevertheless exist.

Despite these shows of restraint, the overall manner remains confrontational (*Fam.* 5.5.3; SB 2):

*ego quae tua causa antea feci, voluntate sum adductus posteaque constantia; sed reliqua, mihi crede, multo maius meum studium maioremque gravitatem et laborem desiderant. quae ego si non profundero ac perdere videbor, omnibus meis viribus sustinebo; sin autem ingrata esse sentiam, non committam ut tibi ipsi insanire videar.*

What I have already done for you was done at first out of goodwill and later for consistency's sake. But I assure you that the future will make far larger demands on my devotion, loyalty, and energy. I shall persevere with all my might, provided I do not seem to be squandering and wasting my efforts. But if I find them going unappreciated, I shall not let myself be taken for an idiot—even by you.

Again, these comments contrast starkly with the conventionally fulsome assertions of esteem, goodwill and affection regularly found in aristocratic letters. Instead of earnest promises to support Antonius in the future, Cicero advises him that such assistance may in fact be in short supply. He declares a willingness to work energetically on Antonius' behalf (*omnibus meis viribus sustinebo*); but he also states clearly that there are limits to this help. The linguistic tone, too, is more energetic than the formality that usually prevails in such letters: *crede mihi* is assertive and insistent; the alliteration and assonance of *profundero ac perdere* convey a sense of disdain; and the exaggeration of *insanire* is feisty and colloquial. The result is a veiled threat to withdraw his goodwill in their future dealings. It is only at this point that Cicero properly enlists the conventionalized phrases of recommendation and request in order to conclude the letter's formal business (*Fam.* 5.5.3; SB 5):

*atque ipsum tibi Pomponium ita commendo ut, quamquam ipsius causa confido te facturum esse omnia, tamen abs te hoc petam ut, si quid in te residet amoris erga me, id omne in Pomponi negotio ostendas. hoc mihi nihil gratius facere potes.*



And as for Pomponius himself, I recommend him to you, though I am confident that you will do all you can for his own sake. Nevertheless, if you still retain any affection toward me, I ask you to demonstrate it all in assisting Pomponius' business. You can do nothing that will oblige me more.

What, then, are we to make of this letter, whose tone Deniaux describes as "presque brutale"?<sup>67</sup> It is certainly unusual to find Cicero going out of his way to engage in this kind of epistolary recrimination. But there was almost certainly a degree of provocation. The pair had never enjoyed a harmonious relationship. In 64 B.C., Antonius had been suspected of conspiring with Catiline to keep Cicero out of the consulship for 63 B.C.<sup>68</sup> And during his governorship it was rumored that he was extorting money from the provincials in Macedonia partly under Cicero's name.<sup>69</sup> Clearly, too, he had been making mocking comments about Cicero's handling of the Catilinarian conspiracy.<sup>70</sup> The letter thus places us in the middle of long-running tensions and animosities. Cicero is not so much picking a quarrel as retaliating against Antonius' recent attacks on his *dignitas*. If the two men had both been in Rome, these differences could perhaps have been hammered out at a personal conference. As it is, Cicero has to exploit whatever mode of communication is available in order to express his dissatisfaction. The result is not quite (one imagines) the letter of introduction that Atticus had in mind when he made his request; but these verbal jabs are what the traditional aristocratic code required of the *vir fortis*.<sup>71</sup>

## Cicero and T. Fadius

The manner that Cicero adopts with Antonius is thrown into sharper relief when we turn to consider a letter to T. Fadius (*Fam.* 7.27; SB 148), whose "offensive tone" Shackleton Bailey describes as without parallel in the entire correspondence.<sup>72</sup> Fadius was Cicero's quaestor in 63 B.C., and tribune of the people in 57 B.C. In 52 B.C., however, he was convicted on some charge (perhaps electoral corruption) and exiled.<sup>73</sup> Cicero was on cordial enough terms with the man to send him a brief letter of consolation following his conviction (*Fam.* 5.18; SB 51). Several years later, however, their relationship was evidently so strained as to provoke from Cicero the unexpectedly harsh language of *Fam.* 7.27. Although the circumstances and date of this letter are not entirely clear, it is likely that Fadius had earlier made a request for Cicero to stand surety for a financial transaction.<sup>74</sup> Cicero evidently declined, regarding the

request for some reason as rather shameless (*Fam.* 7.27.1: *cum me impudenter rogares*). He received a reply from Fadius rudely accusing him of ingratitude and listing some of the favors that Fadius had done for him in previous years. These favors supposedly included providing support during Cicero's consulship, supplying him with evidence pertaining to the Catilinarian conspiracy, and standing for the tribuneship primarily for Cicero's benefit (*Fam.* 7.27.2). He also appears to have criticized Cicero for not speaking his mind plainly. It is in response to this letter that *Fam.* 7.27 was written.

Cicero begins his reply with some of the techniques of reproach that we have seen employed by several of his more surly correspondents (*Fam.* 7.27.1): *miror cur me accuses cum tibi id facere non liceat. quod si liceret, tamen non debebas*. ("I am surprised that you should reproach me, when you have no right to do so; but even if you had the right, you still should not have done so.") Cicero here exploits the same incredulous use of *miror* as Pompey does when writing to Domitius Ahenobarbus in 49 B.C.;<sup>75</sup> and, like Metellus Celer, he makes disparaging ethical judgments via the verbs *liceat* and *debebat*. His use of the verb *accuso* is also significant: he characterizes Fadius as an aggressor whose attacks call for vigorous defense. To this end, he continues with some repartée designed to rebut in detail Fadius' criticisms (*Fam.* 7.27.1; SB 148):

*'ego enim te in consulatu observaram,' ais, et fore ut te Caesar restituat; multa tu quidem dicis, sed tibi nemo credit. tribun<at>um plebi dicis te mea causa petisse: utinam semper esses tribunus! intercessorem non quaereres.*

"For I had paid you great attention during your consulship," you say, and you say that Caesar will recall you from exile. You say a great deal indeed, but nobody gives you credit. You say you stood for the Tribune on my account. If only you were Tribune all the time! Then you would not be looking for an intercessor.

This is a sharp, aggressive form of self-defense. Instead of patiently refuting Fadius' claims with argument and evidence, Cicero dismisses each in turn with a sarcastic quip. It is a manner, he claims, that demonstrates his own ready wit (*Fam.* 7.27.2): *haec tibi scripsi ut isto ipso in genere in quo aliquid posse vis te nihil esse cognosceres*. ("I have written to you in this way just to let you see that even in the style in which you aspire to shine you are a total failure.") These remarks suggest that Fadius himself had tried to deploy a pointed and facetious manner in his letter to Cicero. This approach, however, only succeeds in provoking Cicero into a directly combative stance. He

depicts the situation now as a verbal duel in which there is a winner and loser—and Fadius is stated quite bluntly to be the deficient one (*te nihil esse*).<sup>76</sup> This manner recalls the abrasive wit (*dicacitas*) that features in several of Cicero's more confrontational political speeches.<sup>77</sup> We may compare, for example, his trading of insults in the senate with P. Clodius, as reported to Atticus at *Att.* 1.16.10 (SB 16), and his sarcastic demolition in *Philippic* 13 of a letter sent by Mark Antony to Hirtius and Octavian in March 43 B.C. (*Phil.* 13.22–48). In the first case, in particular, Cicero presents himself as the triumphant victor in a contest of wits, with his opponent silenced and overthrown.<sup>78</sup> Clearly, we are a long way away here from the supportive facework of conventional aristocratese.

Cicero justifies this unusual tone on the grounds of Fadius' own rudeness and lack of good manners (*Fam.* 7.27.2; SB 148): *quod si humaniter mecum questus esses, libenter tibi me et facile purgassem; non ingrata mihi sunt quae fecisti, sed quae scripsisti molesta*. ("If you had remonstrated with me in civil fashion, I would willingly and easily have cleared myself. I am not ungrateful for what you did, but I *am* annoyed at what you wrote.") Cicero would (he claims) have happily engaged in a measured and civil explanation of his actions, if only Fadius himself had maintained a degree of restraint in his complaints. The underlying principle here is similar to the one that he articulates in his clash with Crassus discussed earlier. Criticisms expressed vigorously but respectfully are quite acceptable; but Cicero will not put up with personal insult and snide vituperation. Such remarks require more than just a defense of his actions (note again the verb *purgassem*); they call for a belligerent assertion of his *dignitas*.

The letter concludes just as sharply (*Fam.* 7.27.2): *me autem, propter quem ceteri liberi sunt, tibi liberum non visum demiror. nam si falsa fuerunt quae tu ad me, ut ais, detulisti, quid tibi ego debeo? si vera, tu es optimus testis quid mihi populus Romanus debeat*. ("And I am much surprised that you take me, to whom my fellows owe their freedom, for no better than a slave. If the information you say you gave me was false, what do I owe you? If it was true, you are in an excellent position to testify what the Roman People owes *me*.") Unfortunately we have no record of Fadius' reaction to this stinging censure.<sup>79</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

The conflicts and stresses of aristocratic politics ensured that Cicero could not in reality hope to be the anger-free man of perfect equanimity depicted in *De Officiis*.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the more traditional ethical code of the Roman

aristocrat required him to defend his honor vigorously and courageously. Metellus Celer's letter to Cicero demonstrates one way in which this principle could be applied. And in his letters to Fadius and Antonius Hybrida we find Cicero following much the same path. Although the language of such letters is deliberately brusque and "impolite," it is usually justified by a rhetoric that invokes core values of Roman friendship or issues of personal insult and injury. In Cicero's spat with Fadius, it is important to remember that he had already replied to the man's original "impudent" request. There is every reason to suppose that he had done so in a polite but firm manner, perhaps even with the kind of gentle reproof (*clemens castigatio*) that he recommends in *De Officiis*. It is only after receiving a second rude letter that he resorts to pungent sarcasm. In this competitive, male-dominated environment, Cicero well understood the importance of baring his vituperative teeth when challenged. In all cases, however, he is careful to avoid actual *contumelia*.

In general, then, Cicero's initial tendency is toward polite restraint. In his correspondence with Appius Claudius, we can track over several letters an increasing bellicosity as the conflict between the two men grows. Nevertheless, the overriding concern is to maintain a degree of decorum. At times, we may suspect a degree of shrewd political calculation behind this. As we have seen in the case of his reply to Celer, there is perhaps considerable benefit to be derived from an image of self-assured poise. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to suppose that Cicero was strongly committed to these principles of restraint and decorum for their own sake. In his wranglings with Atticus' freedman Dionysius, discussed in the previous chapter, he only resorts to vehement epistolary language after various attempts at negotiation have broken down. This tendency toward restraint is evident in his face-to-face encounters also. His account of an encounter that took place when he was provincial governor in 50 B.C. is particularly illuminating (*Att.* 6.3.6; *SB* 117):

*is igitur Gavius, cum Apameae me nuper vidisset Romam proficiscens, me ita appellavit <ut> Culleolum vix auderem: 'unde' inquit 'me iubes petere cibaria praefecti?' respondi lenius quam putabant oportuisse qui aderant, me non instituisse iis dare cibaria quorum opera non essem usus. abiit iratus.*

Well, this Gavius, seeing me recently at Apamea as he was leaving for Rome, accosted me in a tone I should hardly dare to use to Culleolus: 'Where am I supposed to apply for my maintenance allowance as

Prefect?' I answered more gently than those present thought he deserved, that it was not my practice to give maintenance allowances to persons whose services I had not used. He left in a huff.

Even to provocatively rude men of lower rank, Cicero's first inclination is toward forbearance—even to a fault (*lenius quam putabant oportuisse*).<sup>81</sup>

# 5

## Politeness and Political Negotiation

This final chapter develops in further detail some of the ideas articulated in our earlier discussions. It focuses in particular on two sets of correspondence, both of which arise from the turbulent months following Caesar's assassination in March 44 B.C.: the letters of Marcus Brutus and Cassius Longinus to Mark Antony, and the extensive body of correspondence exchanged between Cicero and L. Munatius Plancus. In the first case, we shall see that Cicero's concern with maintaining a poised civility at moments of political conflict was by no means just a personal foible. It was part of an established cultural code that could convey a significant social meaning to peers and acquaintances. In the second case, we revisit some of the issues raised in chapter 2 regarding the manipulative dimension of affiliative politeness. In Munatius Plancus we find a correspondent who employs with the greatest finesse virtually all of the conventionalized strategies of politeness that we have identified. As we shall see, however, the uncertainty of the situations in which he exploits them only serves to highlight their duplicitous potential. At times, polite fictions can indeed be difficult to distinguish from lies and hypocrisy.

### Brutus, Cassius, and Mark Antony

Cicero's extant correspondence preserves for us two letters written jointly by Marcus Brutus and Cassius Longinus to Mark Antony in the months following Caesar's assassination.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, this was a time of high tension. Far

from restoring the senate to power, the assassination had given Antony (consul in 44 B.C.) the opportunity to maneuver himself into a position of political dominance.<sup>2</sup> During April and the first weeks of May, he was busy mobilizing the support of Caesar's veterans around Campania, and evidently advised Brutus and Cassius to keep their supporters out of harm's way in towns where these veterans might congregate—friendly advice perhaps, or possibly a tactic of intimidation.<sup>3</sup> By May 21, he was back in Rome with a sizeable force, and a week or so later Cicero was receiving reports from various sources that the veterans at Rome posed a real danger to supporters of the assassins.<sup>4</sup> By this time, Cassius and Brutus, both of whom held the office of praetor but had no significant military force at their disposal, had withdrawn to the area around Lanuvium.<sup>5</sup> They had probably already obtained permission to be absent from Rome for an extended period (as was required by their office);<sup>6</sup> but their situation was uncomfortable and marginalized, and in these difficult circumstances they send a letter to Antony (*Fam.* 11.2; SB 329) addressing these developments.

The letter is remarkable for its polite, diplomatic tone. As such, it gives us a fascinating insight into the way in which high level, semipublic negotiations could be conducted in these circles. (The presence of the letter in Cicero's correspondence confirms its intended distribution among leading politicians.) As we shall see, the letter's essential business is confrontational: Cassius and Brutus imply that Antony is carefully orchestrating a hostile and dangerous force against them. Yet they present these assertions in such a courteous and respectful way that they can reasonably claim to have made every attempt to avoid aggravating an already tense situation. At times, there may seem to be a certain archness to this elaborate courtesy; but they carry through these polite gestures with such consistency and apparent commitment that they succeed in upholding the necessary outer forms of civility and respect.

The letter opens with a meticulous assurance that they are not writing because of their mistrust of Antony (*Fam.* 11.2.1; SB 329): *de tua fide et benevolentia in nos nisi persuasum esset nobis, non scripsissemus haec tibi; quae profecto, quoniam istum animum habes, in optimam partem accipies*. ("Unless we were convinced of your good faith and goodwill toward us, we would not have written you this letter. Since you are in fact thus disposed, you will doubtless take it in the best part.") This adroit formulation conveys a measure of deference, with its suggestion that they have contemplated not sending the letter to Antony at all for fear of causing him offense; but their optimistic expression of belief in his goodwill also functions as an affiliative gesture.<sup>7</sup> Having established this tone of measured respect, Brutus and Cassius proceed directly to the letter's main concern (*Fam.* 11.2.1–2):

*scribitur nobis magnam veteranorum multitudinem Romam convenisse iam et ad Kal. Iun. futuram multo maiorem. de te si dubitemus aut*

*vereamur, simus nostri dissimiles. sed certe, cum ipsi in tua potestate fuerimus tuoque adducti consilio dimiserimus ex municipiis nostros necessarios, neque solum edicto sed etiam litteris id fecerimus, digni sumus quos habeas tui consili participes, in ea praesertim re quae ad nos pertinet. qua re petimus a te facias nos certiores tuae voluntatis in nos, putesne nos tutos fore in tanta frequentia militum veteranorum, quos etiam de reponenda ara cogitare audimus; quod velle et probare vix quisquam posse videtur qui nos salvos et honestos velit.*

We are informed by letters that a large number of veterans has already gathered in Rome, and that a much larger number is expected before the Kalends of June. It would be out of character for us to feel any doubt or apprehension about you. But having placed ourselves in your hands and dismissed our friends from the municipalities on your advice, having done that moreover not only by edict but in private letters, we surely deserve to share your confidence, particularly in a matter which concerns us. Therefore we request you to inform us of your disposition toward us, whether you think we shall be safe among such a multitude of veteran soldiers, who are actually thinking, so we hear, of replacing the altar. It is not easy to believe that anyone who desires our security and dignity can desire and approve of that.

The most notable feature here is the letter's use of indirectness, a common strategy of redressive politeness.<sup>8</sup> Brutus and Cassius carefully avoid accusing Antony of actually coordinating the gathering of veterans; the crowd is depicted instead as simply having assembled (*multitudinem convenisse*). Similarly, it is the troops of soldiers (*tanta frequentia militum veteranorum*) that cause them anxiety, not Antony himself. Likewise it is the soldiers alone who are depicted as eager to reestablish the altar to Caesar, an act with obvious political ramifications for the assassins.<sup>9</sup> The use of *audimus* further contributes to the indirectness of their remarks. Moreover, they diplomatically claim to be seeking merely a clarification of Antony's intentions toward them (*tuae voluntatis in nos*); they do not accuse him directly of acting in a hostile way. In the same way, their final sentence is cast in a tactfully hedged form: *vix quisquam* is less assertive than *nemo*; *posse videtur* is less direct than *potest*; and emphasis is placed on theoretically positive motives (*nos salvos et honestos velit*) rather than Antony's possible enmity. The awkward context in which these comments are made ensures that their implication can be readily perceived (i.e., Antony is pursuing obstructive and hostile policies); but Cassius and Brutus behave respectfully by playing out the fiction that they are on cordial terms with him.



Nevertheless, the assassins also need to demonstrate that they are not intimidated by these recent developments. They achieve this in a measured, yet impressive fashion by making conventionally aristocratic claims regarding their own prestige. The phrase *simus nostri dissimiles* ("it would be out of character for us") loftily implies that they hold themselves up to a high standard of behavior. Similarly, they calmly insist on a degree of respect from Antony (*digni sumus quos habeas tui consili participes*). They then go on to declare that, despite the violence and upheaval of the assassination, their intent has been proved to be decent and peaceful (*Fam.* 11.2.2; SB 329): *nos ab initio spectasse otium nec quicquam aliud libertate communi quaesisse exitus declarat*. ("The outcome shows that peace has been our aim from the beginning, and that we have had no object in view but the freedom of the community.") This is, of course, a politically tendentious claim, and Brutus and Cassius seem to be straying onto even more provocative ground as they go on to point out that Antony is in a unique position to trick them (*Fam.* 11.2.2): *fallere nemo nos potest nisi tu* ("nobody can deceive us except yourself"). And yet what begins by sounding like an insulting accusation is quickly offset by the acknowledgment that such deceit is far removed from Antony's nature: *quod certe abest ab tua virtute et fide* ("a thing surely abhorrent to your manly and honorable spirit"). They then insist again on Antony's unique position for treachery (*sed alius nemo facultatem habet decipiendi nos*), only to assert that this is in fact an index of the unique trust that he enjoys with them (*Fam.* 11.2.2): *tibi enim uni credidimus et credituri sumus* ("for we have trusted, and shall continue to trust, only you"). Each potentially challenging remark is carefully countered by a phrase of redressive facework.

Similarly, the expression of their central concern—that the veterans will employ violence against supporters of the "liberators"—is hemmed about with strategies of politeness (*Fam.* 11.2.3; SB 329): *maximo timore de nobis adficiuntur amici nostri; quibus etsi tua fides explorata est, tamen illud in mentem venit, multitudinem veteranorum facilius impelli ab aliis quolibet quam a te retineri posse*. ("Our friends are deeply anxious on our behalf. While they have firsthand experience of your good faith, it is in their minds that the crowd of veterans can more easily be impelled by others in any direction they please than held in check by you.") By assigning these concerns about their safety to others (*amici nostri*), Cassius and Brutus tactfully distance themselves from any suspicions regarding Antony's motives (while also deftly suggesting that they personally have no such fears). Similarly, they depict any likely trouble from the veterans as being stirred up by others (*impelli ab aliis*). Their alleged concern is restricted to Antony's inability to restrain such attacks. He is thus presented not as the aggressor but as a benign (if potentially ineffectual) peacekeeper.

The letter concludes, however, with a rather sharper form of self-assertion (*Fam.* 11.2.3):

*rescribas nobis ad omnia rogamus. nam illud valde leve est ac nugatorium, ea re denuntiaturum esse veteranis quod de commodis eorum mense Iunio laturus esses. quem enim impedimento futurum putas, cum de nobis certum sit nos quieturos? non debemus cuiquam videri nimium cupidi vitae cum accidere nobis nihil possit sine perniciē et confusione omnium rerum.*

We request you to give us your reply on all points. For the claim that the veterans were summoned because you intended to bring matters to their advantage before the Senate in June is utterly unconvincing and flimsy. Who do you suppose is likely to be obstructive, since it is certain that we for our part shall not cause trouble? None should believe us over-anxious to preserve our lives, for nothing can happen to us without universal ruin and chaos.

From these remarks, we learn of Antony's pretext for assembling the veterans in Rome: the passing of legislation in their favor at upcoming meetings of the senate. Instead of politely acquiescing in this fiction, Brutus and Cassius challenge it sharply (the polysyllabic *nugatorium* adds a brusque emphasis to the expression). But this impatience is kept carefully within bounds. They continue by reasserting their own policy of peaceful moderation (*nos quieturos*), while affirming their readiness to defend themselves vigorously against any attack. In doing so they again favor an understated and indirect mode of expression: "not being overanxious to preserve our lives" is an ostentatiously oblique way of saying that they will resist Antony to the death.

Brutus and Cassius, then, seem determined to strike a tenor of civility and restraint in these negotiations with Antony. To a degree, this polite formality is simply a manifestation of the manners expected in this kind of aristocratic interaction. Cassius and Brutus perform the conventional shows of respect that evolved precisely in order to provide some kind of buffer in tense situations such as these. We know, too, that Antony himself was fully conversant with these conventions. It was only a few weeks earlier that he had written with such careful courtesy to Cicero regarding the recall from exile of Sextus Cloelius.<sup>10</sup> It is reasonable to assume, then, that the two parties had already established a framework of civil courtesy for their dealings with each other. But there is probably also a prudently defensive aspect to this scrupulous politeness. The assassins are determined to deny Antony any means

of stirring up further animosity against them. No one can accuse them of treating their political rival with disrespect. Indeed, this courteous and measured manner also functions as a positive form of self-fashioning. Caesar's murderers depict themselves here as responsible citizens who have no desire to destabilize the state further. They are restrained and reasonable men, quite unlike the violent revolutionaries that the Caesarian propaganda was already striving to create.<sup>11</sup>

We have no record of Antony's response, but we can probably assume that he adopted a correspondingly diplomatic tone, incorporating perhaps a number of evasive excuses and bland reassurances. It is clear, however, that in fact he had no intention of allowing the praetors to return safely to Rome. On June 5, he oversaw a *senatus consultum* assigning Brutus and Cassius a command to supervise the grain supplies from Sicily and Asia.<sup>12</sup> Both Cicero and Cassius regarded the appointment as an insult, and there is little doubt that it was designed to secure the legitimate removal of the praetors from Rome.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Antony may have been able to depict it in relatively honorable terms: the appointment was to serve the public good at a time of impending food shortage;<sup>14</sup> and it gave them a legal basis for a command over (admittedly limited) military resources. To this extent, the appointment was not overtly hostile and could be shrewdly presented as a further example of Antony's own moderation.<sup>15</sup>

At a family council around June 7, however, Brutus and Cassius were inclined to reject the commission.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, in the following weeks Brutus was occupied with his responsibility as *praetor urbanus* to organize the *Ludi Apollinares* in July, from which he could hope to procure some support in the city. In the end, however, although the games went ahead (from July 6 to 13), the danger posed by the veterans prevented him from attending them in person.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, shortly after (probably July 20 to 28), Octavian scored a political success with his celebration of the *Ludi Veneris Genetricis* at which Caesar's memory was honored.<sup>18</sup> In response to these worrying developments Cassius and Brutus issued a praetorian edict in advance of the senate-meeting planned for August 1 in which they apparently declared their intention to decline the *curatio frumenti*.<sup>19</sup> This edict provoked Antony to publish an edict of his own, accompanied by a personal letter addressed to the two praetors.<sup>20</sup> These pronouncements drew in turn from the assassins a further edict proclaiming their withdrawal into exile, and a letter to Antony now preserved in our collection as *Fam.* 11.3 (SB 336).<sup>21</sup> In reality, of course, Cassius and Brutus retired not into exile but to the eastern provinces, where they raised an armed force with which to continue their resistance to Antony.

For our present discussion, the significant point is that this conflict seems to have provoked a decisive change in Antony's approach to the praetors.

Gone are the polite posturings that seem to characterize their dealings up to this point; in their place he employs abuse and threats. Or at least this is how Brutus and Cassius depict the style of his edict and letter (note *contumeliosas* and *minacis* at *Fam.* 11.3.1). We may suspect a degree of rhetorical distortion here. By presenting Antony as behaving intemperately, the assassins can claim the moral high ground and sharpen their sense of grievance. Nevertheless their characterization of his style is made with such insistence that it is difficult to dismiss it as mere rhetoric, especially given the public nature of the edict. They refer twice to Antony's threats of violence;<sup>22</sup> and they accuse him of making truculent comments about their killing of Caesar (*Fam.* 11.3.2: *nobis de morte Caesaris obiceres*). Antony's previous civility has evidently given way to aggressive intimidation. How are we to account for this surprising departure from the customary epistolary politeness?

The most likely explanation is that Antony is trying hard to curry favor with Caesar's veterans.<sup>23</sup> He was well aware that Octavian had recently succeeded in claiming some of their loyalties for himself.<sup>24</sup> The present confrontation then offers him an excellent chance to reassert his own position as a determined foe of Caesar's enemies. By adopting an ostentatiously aggressive stance against the assassins, he can demonstrate unequivocally that he is not in the business of cutting deals with Caesar's murderers (as his previous actions might have suggested). His language is thus pitched at a deliberately brusque level in order to cultivate this image of staunch, no-nonsense defender of Caesar's memory. Whether it tipped over into insult and intemperate abuse is impossible for us to judge. What is certain is that Brutus and Cassius make every effort to characterize it in these terms, presumably in order to gain some purchase with the moderates in the senate. They insist that Antony's attack is entirely unprovoked (*Fam.* 11.3.1): *nos, Antoni, nulla lacessi<i>mus iniuria* ("we have not assailed you, Antony, with any insult"). And they characterize his behavior in ethically negative terms, stressing its elements of irrational emotion and abuse (note especially the reference to his *iracundia*). They thus depict Antony as an unreliable hothead, while they themselves are men of restraint and moderation.

Nevertheless, Antony's more aggressive stance requires from them a rather more belligerent response than we saw in *Fam.* 11.2. The stiff deference implied by their relatively formal mode of address (*Antoni*) is then followed by measured irony (*Fam.* 11.3.1): *quod si indignaris ausos esse id facere, concede nobis ut doleamus ne hoc quidem abs te Bruto et Cassio tribui*. ("If you resent our venturing it, permit us to be sorry that you grudge even so small a license to Brutus and Cassius.")<sup>25</sup> There is sarcasm here in the exaggerated phrase *ausos esse* and in their request for Antony's permission to feel *dolor* (*concede nobis ut doleamus*). Moreover, the remark *ne hoc quidem*

neatly emphasizes the excessive degree (as they see it) of Antony's repressive actions. The reference to themselves in the third person (*Bruto et Cassio*) also contributes to their aim of self-assertion: they have (they imply) a separate public identity that commands its own respect and attention. Far from apologizing to Antony for causing offense, Cassius and Brutus claim their own right to feel aggrieved.

In section 2, they move on to address Antony's accusation that they have been levying troops and trying to organize resistance overseas (*de dilectibus habitis...et nuntiis trans mare missis*). Antony had evidently stressed his forbearance in this regard (*te questum esse negas*), and this polite restraint appears to earn a reciprocal show of respect (*Fam.* 11.3.2): *nos quidem tibi credimus optimo animo te fecisse* ("we for our part believe that you acted thus with the best of intentions"). But this compliment in fact cleverly sets up the cutting criticism that follows: *et te miramur, cum haec reticueris, non potuisse continere iracundiam tuam quin nobis de morte Caesaris obiceres*. ("We are surprised too that, when you have kept silent on these matters, you could not control your anger so far as to refrain from attacking us on the matter of Caesar's death.")<sup>26</sup> This flourish neatly serves to distract attention away from Antony's claims regarding their subversive activities, about which they can offer only a flat and suspiciously brief denial: *sed tamen neque agnoscimus quicquam eorum* ("but at the same time we do not acknowledge any of these allegations"). Cassius and Brutus score points where they can and pass quickly over the more awkward issues that Antony raises.

In the next section, the assassins set out to present themselves as staunch and unwavering in the face of Antony's intimidation. Plain assertion, phrased in blunt but moderate terms, provides one means, as we see in the claim at *Fam.* 11.3.3: *quorum fiducia nihil est quod nos terreas*. ("You cannot rely on these threats to make us afraid.") Likewise with the remark (*Fam.* 11.3.3): *nos si alia hortarentur ut bellum civile suscitare vellemus, litterae tuae nihil proficerent*. ("If other grounds led us to want to stir up civil war, your letter would have no effect on us.") In addition, they deploy the vocabulary of ethical judgment to endow their position with a certain moral authority (*Fam.* 11.3.3): *neque enim decet aut convenit nobis periculo ulli submittere animum nostrum neque est Antonio postulandum ut iis imperet quorum opera liber est*. ("It would be unworthy and unbecoming for us to be intimidated by any threat; and Antony should not claim authority over those to whom he owes his freedom.") The respect bestowed on Antony here through the use of the third person reference (*Antonio*) is offset by their flat denial that he has any right to make demands of them. Indeed, the final phrase presents in apparently bland language a highly provocative interpretation of their position: Caesar's assassins are liberators of the state to whom Antony owes his

political freedom (*quorum opera liber est*). Brutus and Cassius nimbly overthrow his claim to dominance as consul.<sup>27</sup>

The most significant point here is that Cassius and Brutus do not reciprocate Antony's use of blustering intimidation in their reply. Certainly, they employ sarcasm, rhetorical distortion, and blunt assertion. But they maintain a poise and hauteur in manner that establishes a clear difference in their personal styles. This difference is seen most strikingly in section 4, where Brutus and Cassius do in fact threaten Antony with violence. They phrase this threat in such a skillfully oblique way, however, that they forsake none of this appearance of civility. The generous and optimistic remarks that open the paragraph help to set up the desired effect (*Fam.* 11.3.4): *nos in hac sententia sumus ut te cupiamus in libera re publica magnum atque honestum esse, vocemus te ad nullas inimicitias*. ("This is our view: we are very eager for you to hold an important and respected position in a free republic, and we are not trying to provoke you to enmity.") Nevertheless, this happy state of affairs comes with one crucial condition—political freedom must take priority: *sed tamen pluris nostram libertatem quam tuam amicitiam aestimemus*. ("At the same time, we value our freedom more than your friendship.") So far, so reasonable. Indeed, they go on to offer Antony what seems at first sight eminently sensible advice: *tu etiam atque etiam vide quid suscipias, quid sustinere possis*. ("On your part, consider well what you are undertaking and what you can sustain.") These friendly intentions, however, take on a rather more sinister twist with the following delicately phrased remark: *neque quam diu vixerit Caesar sed quam non diu regnarit fac cogites*. ("Bear in mind, not how long Caesar lived, but for how short a time he reigned as king.") It is difficult to imagine a more polite threat of assassination. Any attempt by Antony to establish an unconstitutional one-man rule (*regnum*, implied by the verb *regnarit*) will end in the same violent way as Caesar's. But this threat is phrased with such a light touch that its implications become clear only after a moment's consideration. The litotes *quam non diu* is crucial for the effect, as too the mental work required to appreciate the intended contrast between *vixerit* and *regnarit*. As we have seen, too, there are no cues in what has preceded to lead us to expect such a threat. The phrase *fac cogites*, like *tu etiam atque etiam vide*, conveys the impression of earnest advice, or at worst a condescending lecture. Cassius and Brutus demonstrate that there is more than one way to strike an intimidatory pose. Theirs is understated but none the less effective for that.

Both of these letters from Cassius and Brutus to Antony confirm yet again that Cicero's concern with polite restraint in his correspondence is no idiosyncratic trait; it forms part of a wider interactional idiom to which a good number of his contemporaries subscribed. Much of its cultural value

derived from the urbanity and aristocratic *savoir faire* that it connoted; but in contexts of tension and conflict, it could also reduce the damage caused by frayed tempers and bruised egos. Yet their second letter in particular suggests that the social significance of aristocratic courtesy could extend beyond the urbane concerns of a relatively small circle of elite correspondents. As we have seen, it suits Antony's aims in August 44 B.C. to dissociate himself from this language of civil negotiation, with its polite fictions and diplomatic formulas. Indeed, he seems to have adopted a similarly aggressive manner in various edicts issued later in the year.<sup>28</sup> For Brutus and Cassius, by contrast, this determined civility serves a vital wider purpose. Their use of a thoroughly respectable style of language helps to define them as traditional aristocratic statesmen who uphold the established values of the senate. They present themselves as the Republic's reliable and trustworthy champions around whom conservative senators can rally.<sup>29</sup>

## Cicero and Munatius Plancus

Cicero's correspondence with L. Munatius Plancus allows us to chart yet further some of the urgent political negotiations that prevailed in Rome during this period, especially following the departure of Brutus and Cassius for the east.<sup>30</sup> As we shall see, these letters are particularly valuable because they regularly preserve *both* sides of the various diplomatic gambits that the two men undertook. Indeed, Plancus' twelve extant letters provide our most extensive sample of formal correspondence outside that written by Cicero himself.<sup>31</sup>

As we saw in chapter 1, the nature of Plancus' relationship with Cicero early in his career is not entirely clear.<sup>32</sup> It is only in 46 B.C., when Plancus is serving as legate in Africa under Caesar, that we get our first direct insight into their relationship, as Cicero writes to ask his help in the matter of C. Ateius Capito's inheritance (*Fam.* 13.29; SB 282).<sup>33</sup> In the course of his conventionalized assertions of affiliative politeness, Cicero refers to associations with Plancus' father (*iis necessariis qui tibi a patre relictis sint*), to his own *amor* for Plancus, and to Plancus' diligent efforts at cultivating their relationship (*Fam.* 13.29.1). This mention of Plancus' father naturally casts Cicero as the older and more experienced partner, and this dynamic comes to the fore as their epistolary relationship develops in late 44 B.C.

Plancus at this time was governor of Transalpine Gaul (except Narbonese Gaul, which together with Nearer Spain was under the control of M. Lepidus).<sup>34</sup> His political and military support was thus crucial for the various factions now jostling for power. As the end of 44 B.C. approached, several individuals had legions under their command in and around Italy: in addition to Lepidus

and Plancus, there were Decimus Brutus (in Cisalpine Gaul), Mark Antony (on his way to Cisalpine Gaul), Asinius Pollio (in Further Spain), and the newcomer Octavian.<sup>35</sup> The alliances and military configurations that would emerge from this situation were far from certain. Cicero in Rome was trying hard to rally the commanders around a “senatorial,” anti-Antonian cause; others, however, still had ties with the earlier Caesarian regime, a loyalty that both Antony and Octavian were trying to exploit. Around December 10, 44 B.C., as part of his attempts to persuade these various figures to commit themselves to his senatorial camp, Cicero writes to Plancus in the following terms (*Fam.* 10.3.2; SB 355):

*ego, Plance, necessitudinem constitutam habui cum domo vestra ante aliquanto quam tu natus es, amorem autem erga te ab ineunte pueritia tua, confirmata iam aetate familiaritatem cum studio meo tum iudicio tuo constitutam.*

My friendly connection with your family, Plancus, came into being some time before you were born, my affection toward you dates from your early childhood, and a familiar friendship was established by my desire and your choice when you became a grown man.

The language and sentiments here are very similar to those that Cicero employs in *Fam.* 13.29.1 (SB 282), and their formality suggests a degree of social distance between the two men. Nevertheless, Cicero feels able to undertake an earnest exhortation at the end of the letter (*Fam.* 10.3.3):

*omnium rerum tuum iudicium est idque liberum. consul es designatus, optima aetate, summa eloquentia, <in> maxima orbitate rei publicae virorum talium. incumbe, per deos immortalis, in eam curam et cogitationem quae tibi summam dignitatem et gloriam adferat.*

On all issues, the judgment is your own to make and unconstrained. You are Consul-Elect, in the prime of life, and possessor of the highest oratorical talent at a time when the commonwealth is so sorely bereft of men of such caliber. In heaven’s name, devote your attention and consideration to the path that will bring you to the highest honor and glory.

Cicero here employs several forms of facework: he acknowledges Plancus’ political rank (*consul es designatus*) and talent (*summa eloquentia*); and he makes a nod to his intellectual independence (*omnium rerum tuum*



*iudicium est*). But the accompanying exhortation (*incumbe* etc.) defines Cicero as the more experienced partner in their relationship, who assumes an authority to dispense advice regarding the correct path to *dignitas* and *gloria*. As we saw in chapter 3, this was not necessarily a wise or profitable line to take. As a legionary commander who had evidently much impressed Caesar with his talent, Plancus could easily have resented this attempt by Cicero to adopt a potentially patronizing role.<sup>36</sup> To be sure, such differences in age and *dignitas*, together with the requirement for deference that they brought, were something that every senator had to accept and negotiate. But Plancus' response to Cicero's remarks is illuminating. Far from resenting this power play, he depicts himself as more than happy to accept this junior role (*Fam.* 10.4.1; SB 358):

*nullum enim in te officium ne minimum quidem sine maxima culpa videor posse praeterire, in quo tuendo habeo causas plurimas vel paternae necessitudinis vel meae a pueritia observantiae vel tui erga me mutui amoris.*

In my view I cannot overlook even the slightest obligation to you without incurring the greatest blame. I have many reasons for this observance—your relations with my father, the respect I have paid you since childhood and your reciprocal affection for me.

These remarks clearly take their cue from Cicero's comments at *Fam.* 10.3.2. The older man's reference to his *necessitudinem cum domo vestra* is picked up by Plancus' *paternae necessitudinis*; Cicero's *amorem erga te ab ineunte pueritia tua* is now matched by Plancus' *meae a pueritia observantiae*; and his *familiaritatem cum studio meo tum iudicio* finds acknowledgment in Plancus' *tui erga me mutui amoris*. But it is significant that Plancus does not just perfunctorily match Cicero's overtures point for point; he affects to enter on this subordinate role with a certain earnest solemnity (*Fam.* 10.4.2; SB 358): *qua re, mi Cicero, quod mea tuaque patitur aetas, persuade tibi te unum esse in quo ego colendo patriam mihi constituerim sanctitatem*. ("Therefore, my dear Cicero, be convinced that (as our respective ages allow) in cultivating your friendship I have invested you, and only you, with the sacred character of a father.") This is a remarkable gambit that departs significantly from the wrangling for supremacy—or at least equality—that is found so frequently among other correspondents. Plancus the provincial governor submits willingly, almost enthusiastically, to Cicero's authority. Indeed, in a move that raises the stakes considerably, he endows Cicero with *patriam sanctitatem*—the sacred character of a father. He then continues with a further show of

deference, declaring himself eager to live up to the older man's expectations (*Fam.* 10.4.3): *neque, si facultas optabilis mihi quidem tui praesentis esset, umquam a tuis consiliis discreparem nec nunc <c>om<m>ittam ut ullum meum factum reprehendere iure possis*. ("If I had the opportunity (a very desirable one in my view) to have you here with me, I would never dissent from your policies; and as it is, I shall take good care not to let any of my actions give you just ground for censure.") Moreover, he proffers exactly the kind of declaration of political allegiance that Cicero was hoping for in his letter (*Fam.* 10.4.3): *qua re hoc unum tibi persuade, quantum viribus eniti, consilio providere, auctoritate monere potuero, hoc omne rei publicae semper futurum*. ("Therefore convince yourself of one thing: all that my strength can manage, my prudence foresee, and my judgment suggest, shall ever be at the service of the commonwealth.")

At first glance, then, Plancus seems an unusually docile and compliant breed of Roman aristocrat. For once perhaps Cicero can engage with a politician who does not seem to resent his power and influence. But although Plancus' remarks create the impression of a dutiful subordinate eager to do his bidding, other details paint a rather different picture. On December 20, 44 B.C., the senate passed a motion extending Plancus' command of his province into 43 B.C. (*Phil.* 3.38). Yet only a few weeks after Plancus had written so fulsomely to Cicero, there were rumors that he was in negotiations with Antony and willing to relinquish command of his province to him.<sup>37</sup> These negotiations need not in themselves reflect badly on Plancus. His amenability to compromise offered a potential circuit breaker to the imminent clash between Antony and Decimus Brutus over the command of Cisalpine Gaul. But they do suggest that, despite his earnest profusions, Plancus does not in fact feel strictly obliged to follow Cicero in obedient, filial fashion. Moreover, we can see that he is thoroughly acquainted with the affiliative strategies of politeness employed by his colleagues and contemporaries. Note his ingratiating use at *Fam.* 10.4.4 of the address-form *mi Cicero* in response to the older man's more formal appellation *Plance* (*Fam.* 10.3.2), and the conventionalized solicitousness of *persuade tibi*, used at both *Fam.* 10.4.2 and 3. His enthusiastic complacency begins to take on the appearance of a manipulative gambit. Plancus flatters Cicero by playing the part that he thinks Cicero wants him to play.<sup>38</sup>

But Cicero, it seems, is not easily duped. He expresses in his reply a pleasure at receiving such an explicit commitment to the Republican cause, but also makes clear his reservations about Plancus' achievements and intentions so far (*Fam.* 10.5.3; SB 359):

*adhuc enim (patitur tua summa humanitas et sapientia me quid sentiam libere dicere) Fortuna suffragante videris res maximas consecutus;*

*quod quamquam sine virtute fieri non potuisset, tamen ex maxima parte ea quae es adeptus Fortunae temporibusque tribuuntur.*

Up to this point (your admirable good nature and wisdom allow me to put my thoughts freely into words) you appear to have won brilliant success with Fortune on your side. While that would not have been possible without merit, nevertheless the greater part of your achievements is credited to Fortune and circumstance.<sup>39</sup>

Cicero is neither naïve nor gullible. Nevertheless, in the letter's concluding remark he politely cultivates the fiction that Plancus has initiated (*Fam.* 10.5.3): *sic moneo ut filium, sic faveo ut mihi, sic hortor ut et pro patria et amicissimum*. ("I admonish you as a son, I hope for you as for myself, I urge you as one addressing a very dear friend in his country's cause.") It is a light touch that invites Plancus to take the father-son theme further if he wishes; but Cicero himself does not seem inclined to exploit the notion in any extensive way.

This point takes on further significance in light of the claim made by Plutarch that Octavian, too, on occasions addressed Cicero as father (*Life of Cicero* 45): οὕτω γὰρ ὑπήκει τὸ μεῖράκιον αὐτόν, ὥστε καὶ πατέρα προσαγορεύειν. ("And indeed, the young man [sc. Octavian] took his flattery so far that he actually called him father.") It is not entirely clear whether Plutarch is referring here to remarks made in face-to-face encounters or in their correspondence; the former perhaps is more likely.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the extant fragments of Cicero's correspondence with Octavian certainly suggest a degree of sometimes cagey, sometimes awkward courtesy between the pair. There are hints, for example, that Cicero at times employed fulsome affiliative politeness in his dealings with the youth (Cicero to Caesar junior, frag. IV.28): *posthac quod voles a me fieri scribito, vincam opinionem tuam*. ("In future just write what you want me to do. I shall better your expectation.")<sup>41</sup> And to judge from paraphrases in Cicero's letters to Atticus, Octavian himself tried to court the older man with various forms of compliment. On November 4, 44 B.C., for example, Cicero remarks (*Att.* 16.9; SB 419): *binæ uno die mihi litterae ab Octaviano, nunc quidem ut Romam statim veniam; velle se rem agere per senatum. . . ille autem addit 'consilio tuo.'* ("Two letters for me from Octavian in one day! Now wants me to return to Rome at once, says he wants to work through the Senate. . . He adds 'with your advice.'") Octavian here tries to offer a gracious nod to the senior man's influence and wisdom; yet Cicero's phrasing suggests that he finds something jarring in the inclusion of the phrase *consilio tuo*. Perhaps its ingratiating manner seems at odds with the peremptory tone of the rest of

the letter; or perhaps he is bemused by such a smooth gambit being essayed by a mere teenager.

Octavian's manner seems to ruffle feathers again in another letter written around the same time (*Att.* 16.11.6; SB 420): *deinde ab Octaviano cotidie litterae ut negotium suscipere, Capuam venire, iterum rem publicam servare, Romam utique statim. . . sed est plane puer. putat senatum statim.* ("I get letters every day from Octavian urging me to rise to the task, come to Capua, save the Republic a second time, and at all events to return to Rome at once. . . But he is very much a boy. Thinks the Senate will meet at once.") Again Octavian attempts to flatter Cicero, this time with a remark about saving the Republic a second time. This would be an elegant enough strategy by itself perhaps. Yet, in all other respects, Octavian succeeds in inverting the established framework of aristocratic relations: a teenager is trying to exhort and urge an experienced consular to action. No surprise that Cicero feels the need to cut him down to size with the condescending remark: *sed est plane puer.*

It is plausible enough then that Octavian in another letter (or meeting) had tried to ingratiate himself by addressing Cicero as *pater*. Nevertheless, the examples just examined indicate that Cicero was quite aware of the manipulative intent behind the young man's language. Indeed, the notorious aphorism attributed to him—that Octavian should be praised, honored and then removed—suggests that both parties were involved in a degree of tactical subterfuge.<sup>42</sup> If Octavian ultimately prevailed in these political struggles, his victory derived more from his unexpectedly audacious exploitation of Caesar's veterans than from his precocious inveigling (as Plutarch would have it) of the ageing orator.<sup>43</sup>

This wider context of polite negotiation is important for our appreciation of Cicero's correspondence with Plancus. At this time of political uncertainty, the forging of alliances was a prime consideration for the leading players of the moment. Affiliative politeness thus features prominently in the letters of this period, as individuals set out to indicate their amenability to negotiation and cooperation. Indeed, we find Cicero himself trying to exploit these strategies shortly after Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C., as he rather clumsily attempts to court Cornelius Dolabella. Like Plancus, Dolabella was an ambitious supporter of Caesar from the younger generation. Appointed suffect consul for 44 B.C. by Caesar in anticipation of his departure for Parthia, Dolabella stepped into the vacant consulship soon after the Ides of March.<sup>44</sup> Several weeks later, toward the end of April, he vigorously suppressed riots stirred up in Rome by supporters of Caesar, dismantling in the process an altar set up in the forum in honor of the dead dictator.<sup>45</sup> These measures seemed to Cicero an important blow against the rapidly rising opposition to Caesar's assassins, and he wrote

in enthusiastic terms about them to Atticus (*Att.* 14.16.2; SB 370): *o Dolabellae nostri magnam ἀριστείαν! quanta est ἀναθεώρησις!* ("What a splendid star performance from our friend Dolabella. What a marvel for people to contemplate!") He then proceeded to send a congratulatory letter to Dolabella himself, a copy of which he forwarded to Atticus.<sup>46</sup>

Cicero's relationship with Dolabella at this time was a complicated one. On the one hand, the orator's age and consular rank endowed him with greater *auctoritas*, and he had in the past successfully defended Dolabella in court against serious charges (*Fam.* 3.10.5; SB 73). On the other hand, Dolabella himself had achieved a position of considerable influence under Caesar and had aided Cicero in significant ways both before and after the civil war.<sup>47</sup> Matters were complicated yet further by Dolabella's marriage to, and subsequent divorce from, Cicero's daughter Tullia (the divorce was finally concluded in 46 B.C.). The few extant letters exchanged between the two men before 44 B.C. show Cicero employing a relatively informal and bantering tone.<sup>48</sup> This tone is appropriate both to their association by marriage and to the sophisticated pretensions that the two men entertained.<sup>49</sup> Dolabella, for his part, adopts a respectfully deferential but sophisticated tone when he writes to Cicero in rather awkward circumstances in 48 B.C., although we can probably assume that his letters in less tense situations reciprocated the older man's bantering style.<sup>50</sup>

Cicero's letter in May 44 B.C., however, employs an especially exuberant form of affiliative politeness. He expresses his great joy at Dolabella's successes (section 1: *magnam laetitiam voluptatemque capiebam*); generously reports the praise that the younger man's actions have garnered (section 1: *te summis laudibus ad caelum extulerunt*); passes on the congratulations and thanks of L. Caesar in a direct quote (section 3: *Dolabellae vero tuo et gratulor et gratias ago*); confesses to his own impassioned enthusiasm for Dolabella's conduct (section 4: *his tuis factis sic incensus sum ut nihil umquam in amore fuerit ardentius*); addresses him directly three times as *mi Dolabella* (sections 1, 4, and 8); and employs a high number of superlatives and intensive forms (sections 1 and 2: *maximo*; *permulti*; *summis*; *maximas*; *praestantissimum*; *verissime*). In total, these professions extend to a remarkable sixty-six lines. They thus succeed in conveying quite emphatically Cicero's support and amenability to political cooperation. But the orator also attempts something rather more ambitious, trying to maneuver himself into a position of adviser to the new consul. His first step is to claim a share in the plaudits that Dolabella has received for his recent actions (*Att.* 14.17A.1; SB 371A):

*non possum non confiteri cumulari me maximo gaudio quod vulgo hominum opinio socium me ascribat tuis laudibus. neminem conveni... quin*

*omnes, cum te summis laudibus ad caelum extulerunt, mihi continuo maximas gratias agant. negant enim se dubitare quin tu meis praeceptis et consiliis obtemperans praestantissimum te civem et singularem consulem praebeas.*

I cannot but confess that I am overwhelmed with the greatest delight by the fact that popular opinion makes me a partner in your glory. Every single person I have met... has first praised you sky high in the most glowing terms and then in the same breath expressed deep gratitude to me. For they say they have no doubt that it is by following my precepts and advice that you are showing yourself so admirable a citizen and so extraordinary a Consul.

Cicero here tries to forge a close link between their political goals, placing Dolabella in the role of one who puts into practice the orator's high-minded ideals of government. But this is a risky gambit. As we have seen, Roman aristocrats jealously guarded their prestige and glory. This attempt to install himself as dispenser of sage advice (note the phrase *meis praeceptis et consiliis*) was likely to appear intrusive and interfering. Cicero therefore tries to make the proposition more palatable by casting himself as Nestor to Dolabella's King Agamemnon (*Att.* 14.17A.2):

*et tamen non alienum est dignitate tua, quod ipsi Agamemnoni, regum regi, fuit honestum, habere aliquem in consiliis capiendis Nestorem, mihi vero gloriosum te iuvenem consulem florere laudibus quasi alumnus disciplinae meae.*

And yet it is not incompatible with your prestige to have a Nestor to consult, as did the King of Kings Agamemnon without any loss of dignity. As for me, it is a proud thing that a young Consul should abound in glory as a pupil, so to speak, from my school.

Although equating Dolabella with Agamemnon is doubtless intended to be an attractive compliment, Cicero clearly articulates the junior role that the man is supposed to take. Dolabella may be consul but he is still *iuvenis* and an *alumnus* in the shadow of the great orator. And yet Cicero himself seems to realize that striking the right balance between ingratiation and self-assertion is a tricky matter. Following a jokingly presumptuous request that he be allowed to share in Dolabella's glory, he hurries on to assure the consul that this is all just a bit of lighthearted banter (*Att.* 14.17A.4; SB 371A): *haec enim iocatus sum*. ("For I have written the above only in jest.") The

older man senses that the ploy is a difficult one to accomplish without giving offense.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, the letter as a whole seems rather poorly conceived, and its effusive eulogy of Dolabella's actions prompted censure from Atticus, who evidently took a rather more cynical view of Dolabella's susceptibility to this kind of courtship.<sup>52</sup> We have no record of the younger man's response to these overtures. Soon afterward, Cicero wrote him a rather sharp letter complaining about his tardiness in repaying Tullia's dowry, a fact that suggests there was no sudden new accord between them.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, later in the month Dolabella was prepared to offer Cicero a post as legate on his staff in Syria, the province to which the consul had been appointed as governor for the following year.<sup>54</sup> Both men cannily keep their options open.<sup>55</sup>

Cicero then was fully conversant with strategies of polite courtship, if not always successful. It is with this in mind that we should consider his correspondence over the following months with Plancus, who continued his flexible political stance into the first part of 43 B.C. Toward the start of March, both Plancus and Lepidus sent letters to the senate urging them to come to some kind of peaceful settlement with Antony (their letters were read out at a meeting of the senate on March 20 B.C.).<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Antony referred to Plancus at this time as a partner in his counsels (*Phil.* 13.44: *particeps consiliorum*). Cicero's response to this development illustrates the special relationship that he was trying to cultivate with Plancus. To Lepidus he writes a terse, tight-lipped letter (*Fam.* 10.27; SB 369), asserting bluntly that no respectable person approves of such proposals for peace. His letter to Plancus by contrast (*Fam.* 10.6; SB 370) extends to over thirty lines and adopts a more benevolent manner. Cicero implores Plancus to dissociate himself from these policies (*seiuunge te, quaeso*), and stresses the positive things that he can still achieve for the republic (*Fam.* 10.6.3). It is likely, too, that Cicero tactfully excised any critical comments regarding Plancus from his circulated version of *Philippic* 13.<sup>57</sup> He is happy to engage in public censure of Lepidus (*Phil.* 13.7–17), but prefers to uphold an optimistic fiction of concord and unanimity as far as Plancus is concerned.

Not long after, on April 7, there arrived in Rome from Plancus both a personal letter for Cicero (*Fam.* 10.7; SB 372) and an official communication to the senate (*Fam.* 10.8; SB 371), in which he pledged a greater commitment to the senatorial cause. This promise seems to initiate a significant shift in their epistolary relationship. Over the following months, the two men appear determined to match each other in their use of an especially lively and ebullient form of affiliative politeness. In his reply written on April 11, 43 B.C., for example, Cicero adopts a notably energetic manner (*Fam.* 10.12.1; SB 377):

*etsi rei publicae causa maxime gaudere debeo tantum ei te praesidi,  
tantum opis attulisse extremis paene temporibus, tamen ita te victorem*

*complectar re publica recuperata ut magnam partem mihi laetitiae tua dignitas adfert, quam et esse iam et futuram amplissimam intellego.*

Although I ought to rejoice most of all for the republic's sake that you have brought it such great protection and help in what is virtually its final hour, nevertheless just as I intend, when the republic has been restored, to embrace you as victor, so a great part of my joy derives from your prestige, which I recognize is already of the highest order and will remain so in the future.

There are familiar elements here: the expression of pleasure in Plancus' achievements; the acknowledgment of his *dignitas*; the careful framing of a compliment; and the expected superlatives (*maxime, amplissimam*). Yet Cicero also works hard to introduce additional exuberance and energy. Note the repetition of *tantum*, the insistence of *et esse iam et futuram*, and the physicality expressed by the verb *complectar*. This planned embrace lies some way off in the future (*re publica recuperata*), but such expressions feature only rarely in his correspondence.<sup>58</sup> This ebullience continues in the following sections (note *incredibili gaudio sum elatus* and *voluptas* in section 2, *mirabiliter* in section 4), and Cicero concludes in section 5 with another exhortation to carry on the good work and follow the path of virtue (*perge igitur ut agis* etc.). Indeed, he continues in this role of mentor and moral guide as he offers conventional pledges of support (section 5): *me tuae dignitatis non modo fautorem sed etiam amplificatorem cognosces*. ("You shall realize that I am not only a supporter but also an augments of your prestige.") Overall, then, we see a shift away from the cautious, occasionally harsh lectures of his earlier letters to Plancus, and a move toward a more animated manner.<sup>59</sup>

As we might expect, Plancus reciprocates with matching effusiveness (*Fam.* 10.11.1; SB 382): *immortalis ago tibi gratias agamque dum vivam; nam relaturum me adfirmare non possum*. ("I give you everlasting thanks and will continue to do so as long as I live. As for being able to repay you, this I cannot guarantee.") As he continues, he craftily invokes again the father-son dynamic (sect. 1): *si de fili tui dignitate esset actum, amabilius certe nihil facere potuisses*. ("If the matter had concerned the prestige of your own son, you could certainly not have acted with any greater affection.") This touch, however, again puts us on our guard: is this another example of Plancus playing a cat-and-mouse game of enthusiastic civility? It is difficult to tell. The letter was written around May 1, about a week after Antony's setbacks at Mutina.<sup>60</sup> Quite possibly Plancus now judged the senatorial cause to be in the ascendancy and felt able to dedicate himself to it with greater decisiveness. Indeed, over the following months we find him endeavoring to keep Cicero informed of military developments in an apparently spontaneous and conscientious



way.<sup>61</sup> He also complains of Lepidus' treachery,<sup>62</sup> and takes steps to combine forces with the bedraggled legions led by Decimus Brutus.<sup>63</sup>

Throughout this period, his letters continue with their elegantly contrived pledges and expressions of appreciation.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps most striking are the earnest remarks in his last extant letter, written on July 28, 43 B.C. (*Fam.* 10.24.1; SB 428):

*facere non possum quin in singulas res meritaque tua tibi gratias agam, sed mehercules facio cum pudore....quod si mihi vita contigerit, omnis gratas amicitias atque etiam pias propinquitates in tua observantia vincam; amor enim tuus ac iudicium de me utrum mihi plus dignitatis in perpetuum an voluptatis cottidie sit adlaturus non facile dixerim.*

I cannot refrain from thanking you with respect to your services in each particular matter, but, on my word, I do so with embarrassment....But if life is granted me, I shall surpass all the gratitude of friends, all the duteous observance of family in my devotion to you. For I could not easily say whether your affection and esteem for me will bring me more prestige for a long time into the future or more pleasure from day to day.

The energetic elaboration of this courtesy needs by now no detailed commentary. And yet, within a month or so, Plancus had turned over his legions to Antony, thus facilitating the formation of the Second Triumvirate and Cicero's murder by the end of the year.<sup>65</sup>

Later Roman writers have not been especially kind to Plancus' reputation. In Velleius Paterculus, he appears as a groveling sycophant of Cleopatra;<sup>66</sup> in Seneca the Younger he is a figure who dispenses gnomonic advice on the art of flattery.<sup>67</sup> Some of this vitriol derives no doubt from a historical tradition that was hostile to Antony and his supporters.<sup>68</sup> But the remarkable longevity of Plancus' career—in particular his ability to contrive positions of influence for himself under Caesar, Antony, and Octavian in turn—points to a special skill in diplomacy.<sup>69</sup> Certainly, we can discern in his letters to Cicero some of the smooth charm and intelligence on which this career was based. But it is difficult to determine how far he is guilty of hypocrisy and deceit during the summer months of 43 B.C. There is much to sympathize with in his complaints regarding Octavian's actions following the battles of Mutina.<sup>70</sup> A combined force comprising the legions of Plancus, Decimus Brutus, and Octavian, together with the promised troops from Africa, would have presented Antony with a formidable opponent.<sup>71</sup> But nobody could have anticipated the full extent of Octavian's ruthlessness and political acumen

(although his reluctance to align with Decimus the assassin was predictable enough perhaps). Once the hope of this support had evaporated, and with Lepidus now combining with Antony, Plancus' position must have rapidly appeared precarious and isolated. The arrival of Decimus' weakened force evidently did little to inspire confidence.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, Plancus may have found it difficult to convince his troops to join battle with fellow Roman citizens for a cause and strategy that were not well defined.<sup>73</sup> For Decimus, there was no possibility of clemency from the Caesarians, and he had no choice but to take his chances on a doomed journey to try to reach Cassius and Brutus in the east.<sup>74</sup> For Plancus, however, a negotiated alliance may have seemed not only politically expedient but also a sensible, even humane means of avoiding bloodshed in battles he had no hope of winning.

Nevertheless, there is no denying the considerable gap between Plancus' emphatic verbal pledges and his eventual actions. This is, in part, a result of his own personal style. His approach to affiliative politeness is an especially effusive one. As we have seen, the thanks that he extends to Cicero in *Fam.* 10.11.1 (SB 382) are not *plurimas* but *immortalis*. And when professing his commitment to the senatorial cause in a later letter, he cannot stop short of pledging his very life (*Fam.* 10.21.6; SB 391): *nec depugnare, si occasio tulerit, nec obsideri, si necesse fuerit, nec mori, si casus inciderit, pro vobis paratior fuit quisquam*. ("On behalf of you all, no man has ever been more ready than I am, either to fight it out if the opportunity arises, or to withstand a siege if it prove necessary, or to die if chance so fall.") It is not surprising that his reputation among later generations was (to say the least) ambiguous.

## Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, the three different categories of politeness identified in this book had a significant role to play in the urgent political negotiations that followed Caesar's assassination. In their letters to Antony, Brutus and Cassius combine the politeness of respect with redressive facework (primarily strategies of indirectness) in order to reduce the confrontational element in their public dealings with the consul. Their great skill lies in conveying a staunch and impressive image of themselves while working within a framework of restraint. It is not easy to make deadly threats so politely. As I have suggested, this appearance of poise and moderation probably had a wider political resonance, too. Once Antony had opted for a more vitriolic, rabble-rousing manner in his letters and edicts, the politeness of respect and restraint could be used to suggest a contrasting old-school conservatism. The assassins astutely present themselves as supporters of stability rather than revolution.

In Cicero's correspondence with Plancus by contrast, it is affiliative politeness that dominates. Plancus' especially energetic exploitation of its conventions provides a fascinating illustration of the challenges involved in political negotiations at Rome. The fictions inherent in this form of politeness ensured that its use was always potentially duplicitous to a degree. Nevertheless, it often played a vital role in facilitating friendships and alliances in the aristocrat's day-to-day business. It was an essential part of these frequently awkward transactions. In the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, however, the stakes in these political games rose sharply. What were once polite fictions could rapidly turn into acts of political treachery.

The epistolary feints and gambits during this period also emphasise one of the harsh realities of Late Republican politics. In the correspondence that we have considered, Cicero, like Brutus and Cassius, writes essentially from a position of weakness. He can deploy all the polite words he likes to players such as Antony, Plancus, and Octavian; but the brute fact of the matter was that these men had something far more persuasive at their disposal: military muscle.

## Conclusion

“I don’t think politeness is of any use whatsoever.”

—Eric Idle (*New Zealand Listener*, vol. 211 (2007) p. 10)

What then are we to conclude about Cicero’s epistolary use of politeness? As we have seen, the topic is a multifaceted one. In the first place, it was important for the Roman aristocrat to show his correspondent due deference and respect, an aspect of politeness implicit in Latin terms such as *verecundia*, *observantia*, and *honorificus*. This respect was often conveyed through the use of a mutually understood formal linguistic register that drew on a range of conventionalized expressions. These expressions could be deployed in various combinations depending on the circumstances and individuals involved (as we have stressed, there were differing degrees of formality). Deciding on the precise tone to employ usually called for a degree of social discernment. If the choice was well-judged, the social exchange at hand would probably progress smoothly. To this extent, the politeness of respect often passed unnoticed. It was the transgression of expected norms that provoked comment most frequently. Thus, Cicero is irritated by the occasional offhand or arrogant letter from Brutus or Pompey, and he remarks on the respectful language in a letter from Antony precisely because it seems at odds with the (supposedly) insulting nature of its request. In most cases, however, the politeness of respect facilitated potentially awkward social business, and its conventionalized phrases supplied a useful framework for such transactions.

Only by being aware of these conventions can we appreciate the more subtle nuances of their use.

A second feature of aristocratic politeness is the use of affiliative strategies. Sometimes these are quite modest in scale. On occasions, for example, Cicero may express pleasure in another's achievements simply to establish a congenial and polite tone. But a distinctive feature of his correspondence is the development of such strategies into a conventionalized language of political courtship. Explicit assertions of goodwill, esteem, and affection appear frequently in letters to powerful associates, some in essentially formulaic terms, others with more inventive twists. Many such assertions regularly involve a degree of polite fiction, and this pretense of close familiarity, even intimacy, seems to have been entirely acceptable in such contexts. These fictions can easily mislead the modern reader, especially one who is unaware of their conventionalized status. Indeed, the tendency of correspondents to represent their relationships as more engaged and affectionate than they actually were often makes it difficult to assess on the basis of this evidence alone the precise nature of a political association. Other contextual information is usually required to enable us to construct an accurate picture of the relationship at hand.

I have suggested that an explanation for the widespread use of these polite fictions is to be found in Rome's unique political environment. The need for ambitious grandees to manufacture alliances with men they neither trusted nor liked created a distinctive language of polite negotiation. Politeness and politics thus become closely entwined in Cicero's exchanges with men such as Mark Antony, Appius Claudius, and Munatius Plancus. To be sure, it was always the sword, not the pen that prevailed in ancient Rome, as the blood-lettings of the coups, civil wars, and proscriptions of the Late Republic make depressingly clear. Nevertheless, diplomacy and negotiation, alliance-building and power-brokering were crucial elements within these upheavals. A detailed study of the more formal elements in Cicero's correspondence helps us to understand the terms on which such exchanges were regularly conducted.

The emphasis on deference and respect in Cicero's epistolary politeness can similarly be attributed to the Roman preoccupation with status, hierarchy, and personal *dignitas*. In many social encounters, it was important for the recipient's position and prestige to be acknowledged. Moreover, various features of regular aristocratic business, such as providing recommendations, requesting favors, and formulating refusals, were inherently face-threatening. These transactions were thus often not casual, freewheeling affairs, but characterized rather by restraint and circumscribed by formal roles and expectations. Even with Atticus, Cicero on occasion has to revert

to a respectful routine of politeness in order to show due acknowledgment of his friend's status. Likewise, most intrusions into an aristocrat's perceived sphere of influence had to be carefully negotiated with the aid of strategies of redressive politeness, and even well-intentioned advice had to be proffered with proper care and circumspection.

We also have seen that the especially punctilious or witty deployment of politeness allowed the aristocrat to present himself as a man of sophistication. It was a sign of good breeding, for example, to praise a successful rival and thus magnanimously eschew the usual petty political jealousies. But the really urbane correspondent was able to develop this praise in an especially generous or novel way. In the course of our discussion, we have seen Asinius Pollio conveying with a degree of calculated charm his desire to see Cicero; Decimus Brutus, Munatius Plancus, and Marcus Brutus deftly toying with familiar conventions for wry, piquant effect; and Cassius Parmensis striving hard to contrive elegant compliments. Cicero himself seems to have taken this aspect of his letter-writing very seriously. Not only is he punctilious about acknowledging the civilities of his correspondents; he also frequently caps their compliments with further elaborate compliments of his own. This interest in refined manners is also reflected in his rhetorical and philosophical treatises, in which he endows his literary characters with many of these same accomplishments. It is an ethos then that Cicero embraced with great energy. Possibly his motive was to try to acquire a respectability that was lacking in his family lineage; but it is important to remember, too, that he had been associating with highly cultured Greeks and Romans from a young age. In a very real way, this sophistication had become part of his identity. The civility of his letters was thus an important means of self-expression. Indeed, we have seen that he tried to follow principles of restraint and politeness even at moments of conflict. In most cases, he succeeds in this aim, framing his criticisms and complaints in a forceful yet civil manner. On a few occasions, however, righteous indignation prompts him to indulge in the caustic wit and sarcasm for which he was notorious.

At the same time, Cicero's epistolary politeness formed part of a shared idiom of civility among the elite. These strategies of politeness permeated the correspondence of the upper classes to a considerable degree, as the evidence assembled in the appendix demonstrates quite succinctly. Indeed, if we possessed more letters from men such as Pompeius Bithynicus and Quintus Cornificius, two individuals who seem to have been well versed in contemporary etiquette, our view of Cicero's place within this cultural milieu might well be rather different (our picture at present is necessarily Cicero-centric). As it is, we can certainly discern a facility with polite manners in the letters of Julius Caesar, Munatius Plancus, Appius Claudius, Mark

Antony, Decimus Brutus, Gaius Matius, Lentulus Spinther, Gaius Oppius, and Asinius Pollio, to present just an abbreviated list. To be sure, men such as Metellus Celer and Pompey at times show little concern for polite courtesies, but it is difficult to generalize about their deployment of etiquette from this limited evidence. A degree of variation is only to be expected, given the many tensions and conflicts that arose in political careers often spanning twenty years or more. As we have seen, Mark Antony displays careful manners in some instances, while in others, he dispenses with such niceties. Marcus Brutus, likewise, evidently composed rather graceless letters as well as scrupulously civil ones.

It is likely that these basic forms of courtesy continued essentially unchanged during the Imperial period. Members of the elite were still immensely rich and powerful in comparison with the rest of the population, and they were still highly concerned with status and prestige. Patronage, too, still flourished, along with its need for favors, requests, and recommendations. Certainly, under the rule of the emperor, the routes to political advancement were rather different. But rivalries, animosities, and jealousies still continued, and polite fictions would have proved useful as a tool of diplomacy and consensus-building. Yet, it was not the letters from these strained contexts that men such as Pliny and Fronto cared to preserve. There is thus little remaining evidence of this kind of politeness, even though it is reasonable to suppose its existence. In the case of the surviving letters, an analysis from the perspective of the "politeness of camaraderie" would perhaps be more appropriate than a discussion of politeness and politics.

Toward the start of the second book of the *De Oratore*, Cicero has L. Crassus relate an anecdote about the great general Scipio the Younger and his close friend Laelius (*De Oratore* 2.22):

*saepe ex socero meo audiui, cum is diceret socerum suum Laelium semper fere cum Scipione solitum rusticari eosque incredibiliter reperascere esse solitos, cum rus ex urbe tamquam e vinclis evolavissent. non audeo dicere de talibus viris, sed tamen ita solet narrare Scaevola conchas eos et umbilicos ad Caietam et ad Laurentum legere consuesse et ad omnem animi remissionem ludumque descendere.*

I have often heard from my father-in-law [sc. Scaevola] the story of how his own father-in-law Laelius would go into the country, usually in the company of Scipio, and how they would, to an unbelievable degree, become boys again, as soon as they had escaped, so to speak, from the chains of city life to the countryside. I scarcely dare say this about such great men, but still, Scaevola often tells how they were in

the habit of collecting snails and seashells at Caieta and Lavernium, and of indulging in all kinds of distractions and play.

Prestigious senators do not often appear in serious Roman literature behaving with the casual intimacy of carefree little boys (note the vivid and explicit verb *repuerascere*). Caught up in the *vincula* of political life, such men were usually too busy trying to project an image of power and *auctoritas*. Indeed, Crassus' reticence in this passage (*non audeo dicere de talibus viris*) suggests that the revelation of such intimate details regarding public figures could create a degree of anxiety. The maintenance of a grand and impressive façade was a high priority in this competitive environment. Cicero may have felt able to collect epistolary seashells with Atticus, but his dealings with other men were conducted at a greater social distance and negotiated primarily through the discerning and calculated use of linguistic politeness.



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## Appendix

### *Some Common Strategies Used in Affiliative Politeness and the Politeness of Respect*

This appendix lists significant examples of the main strategies of politeness discussed in chapter 1. It is not intended to be all-inclusive (the ready availability of computerized databases and search engines allows readers to locate further examples for themselves). Its prime aim is simply to demonstrate the broad usage of these strategies within both the letters of Cicero himself and those of his numerous correspondents.

The ways in which these expressions function as strategies of politeness are discussed in detail in chapter 1. It bears repeating, however, that assessing a letter's degree of politeness and formality is often a matter of quite subtle calibration. The presence of one or two of these strategies does not in itself make a letter especially "polite" or "formal;" each case must be assessed individually, with close attention given to the accompanying language and social context. This task is complicated yet further by the regular use of polite fictions in aristocratic correspondence, and the tendency to represent utilitarian relationships as close and intimate ones (see chapter 1). Expressions of affection can thus appear in a wide range of contexts. Such complexities need to be taken into consideration when analyzing the occurrence of these phrases in the letters. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this list of strategies provides a useful starting point and framework for undertaking such analyses.

The appearance of these strategies in the letters of aristocrats other than Cicero is especially significant. As noted in chapter 1, because this extant material represents but a minute proportion of their lifetime's correspondence, these examples point to a pervasive and conventionalized formal

idiom whose full extent is now lost to us. Elegant or humorous variations on these familiar expressions are also noted, since these often indicate the existence of a set of interactional expectations that can be manipulated for special effect.

## 1. Expressions of Thanks

See Roesch 2004: 147 and 149; Hellegouarc'h 1972: 206. For the importance attached to passing on thanks, see e.g. *Fam.* 1.10.1 (SB 21), *Fam.* 11.28.8 (SB 349), *Att.* 3.8.3 (SB 53), *Att.* 6.1.2 (SB 115), *Att.* 12.19.2 (SB 257), *Att.* 15.14.1 (SB 402).

### (a) *gratum est* and variants

Also used by: P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (*Fam.* 1.9.1; SB 20), Q. Minucius Thermus (*Fam.* 2.18.1; SB 115), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.20.3; SB 407), L. Papirius Paetus (*Fam.* 9.15.1; SB 196), P. Vatinius (*Fam.* 5.11.1; SB 257).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 5.21.1 (SB 182), *Fam.* 12.17.1 (SB 204), *Fam.* 14.5.1 (SB 119), *Att.* 1.4.3 (SB 9), *Att.* 4.9.2 (SB 85), *Att.* 6.1.13 (SB 115), *Att.* 6.8.5 (SB 122), *Att.* 12.30.1 (SB 270), *Q Fr.* 3.1.12 (SB 21). See also 4 (d) (i).

### (b) *hoc mihi gratius facere nihil potes* and variants (in anticipation of favors granted)

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 5.5.3 (SB 5), *Fam.* 6.9.2 (SB 236), *Fam.* 11.16.3 (SB 434), *Fam.* 11.17.2 (SB 435), *Fam.* 11.29.3 (SB 335), *Fam.* 13.44 (SB 270), *Fam.* 13.55.2 (SB 129), *Fam.* 13.57.2 (SB 133), *Fam.* 13.61 (SB 135), *Fam.* 13.65.2 (SB 134), *Fam.* 13.79 (SB 276), *Fam.* 16.1.3 (SB 120), *Fam.* 16.22.2 (SB 185), *Att.* 5.10.4 (SB 103), *Att.* 5.20.10 (SB 113), *Att.* 9.9.1 (SB 176). See also the joking use at *Fam.* 9.15.5 (SB 196). Variations at *Fam.* 5.13.2 (SB 201); *Att.* 15.14.2 (SB 402).

### (c) *gratias ago* and variants

Also used by: L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.11.1; SB 382; *Fam.* 10.24.1; SB 428), Quintus Tullius Cicero (*Fam.* 16.16.1; SB 44). Elegant variations: M. Junius Brutus (*ad Brut.* 1.6.1; SB 12), D. Junius Brutus Albinus (*Fam.* 11.13.1; SB 388).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 2.9.1 (SB 85), *Fam.* 3.5.1 (SB 68), *Fam.* 13.24.2 (SB 290), *Fam.* 13.27.1 (SB 293), *Fam.* 13.28.1 (SB 294), *Fam.* 13.62 (SB 136).

## 2. Pledges and Promises

Also used by: M. Caelius Rufus (*Fam.* 8.10.5; SB 87), Appius Claudius Pulcher (*Fam.* 3.9.4; SB 72; *Fam.* 3.11.4; SB 74), C. Julius Caesar (*Att.* 7.2.7; SB 125), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.11.3; SB 382), T. Pomponius Atticus (*Att.* 7.3.7; SB 126; *Att.* 15.17.2; SB 394), (probably) Q. Tullius Cicero junior (*Att.* 16.1.6; SB 409), M. Tullius Tiro (*Fam.* 16.21.2; SB 337).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: (*adfirmo* / *confirmo*) *Fam.* 3.10.1 (SB 73), *Fam.* 4.13.4 (SB 225), *Fam.* 5.4.2 (SB 10), *Fam.* 6.13.3 (SB 227), *Fam.* 13.22.2 (SB 288), *Fam.* 13.31.2 (SB 302); (*polliceor*) *Fam.* 2.6.4 (SB 50), *Fam.* 4.13.6 (SB 225), *Fam.* 5.8.4 (SB 25), *Fam.* 6.22.3 (SB 221); (*profiteor*) *Fam.* 3.13.2 (SB 76), *Fam.* 5.8.4 (SB 25); (*promitto*) *Fam.* 3.10.1 (SB 73), *Fam.* 5.8.5 (SB 25), *Fam.* 13.9.3 (SB 139), *Fam.* 13.27.3 (SB 293); (*spondeo*) *Fam.* 7.5.3 (SB 26), *Fam.* 13.9.3 (SB 139), *Fam.* 13.17.3 (SB 283), *Fam.* 13.41.2 (SB 54).

For pledges in face-to-face encounters, see C. Matius (*Att.* 9.11.2; SB 178), and Cn. Pompeius Magnus, C. Julius Caesar, and others (*Q Fr.* 1.2.16; SB 2).

## 3. Expressions of Joy and Pleasure

See Roesch 2004: 149.

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 14.13A.1; SB 367A; *Att.* 14.19.2; SB 372), L. Cornelius Balbus (*Att.* 9.7B.1; SB 174B), C. Julius Caesar (*Att.* 9.7C.1; SB 174C; *Att.* 9.16.2; SB 185), M. Junius Brutus (*ad Brut.* 1.4.1; SB 10), C. Matius (*Fam.* 11.28.1; SB 349), T. Pomponius Atticus (*Att.* 9.10.8; SB 177), M. Porcius Cato (*Fam.* 15.5.2–3; SB 111), C. Trebonius (*Fam.* 12.16.1; SB 328), M. Tullius Cicero junior (*Fam.* 16.21.1 and 7; SB 337).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: (*laetor*) *Fam.* 1.9.2 (SB 20), *Fam.* 2.1.2 (SB 45), *Fam.* 2.9.1 (SB 85), *Fam.* 10.20.3 (SB 407), *Fam.* 11.14.1 (SB 413), *Fam.* 12.2.1 (SB 344), *Att.* 1.20.1 (SB 20), *ad Brut.* 2.4.2 (SB 4); (*gaudeo*) *Fam.* 1.7.8 (SB 18), *Fam.* 2.15.2 (SB 96), *Fam.* 2.18.1 (SB 115), *Fam.* 6.18.4 (SB 218), *Fam.* 7.15.2 (SB 39), *Fam.* 12.25.2 (SB 373), *Fam.* 15.8 (SB 100), *Fam.* 15.9.1 (SB 101), *Q Fr.* 1.2.13 (SB 2), *Q Fr.* 3.1.9 (SB 21), *ad Brut.* 1.2A.1 (SB 6); cf. also *Fam.* 9.14.1 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.1 (SB 371A) and *Fam.* 10.12.2 (SB 377); (*magnam voluptatem capio* etc.) *Fam.* 3.10.4 (SB 73), *Fam.* 3.11.4 (SB 74), *Fam.* 5.7.1 (SB 3), *Fam.* 9.14.1 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.1 (SB 371A), *Fam.* 10.12.5 (SB 377), *Fam.* 13.27.4 (SB 293),

Q Fr. 3.6.3 (SB 26); (*te magnam voluptatem capturum* etc. in letters of recommendation) *Fam.* 13.28.2 (SB 294), *Fam.* 13.31.2 (SB 302), *Fam.* 13.50.2 (SB 266), *Fam.* 13.77.2 (SB 212); (*laetitiam capio*, etc.) *Fam.* 3.9.2 (SB 72), *Fam.* 9.14.1 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.1 (SB 371A), *Fam.* 16.21.1 (SB 337); (*laetitia sum adfectus*, etc.) *Fam.* 15.7.1 (SB 99), *Fam.* 15.9.1 (SB 101), *Fam.* 15.12.1 (SB 102); (*quae me laetitia extulerunt / mihi laetitiam attulerunt*) *Fam.* 2.10.1 (SB 86), *Fam.* 10.5.1 (SB 359).

#### 4. Intensifying Adjectives and Adverbs

See Roesch 2004: 150. Intensifying expressions can be used for emphasis in a variety of situations and for different purposes; politeness is just one of these. The examples listed here confine themselves to cases in which a polite affiliative intent is clearly evident (see, e.g., the lists of nouns often used in conjunction with such expressions).

##### (a) *singularis*

Used in polite combination with the nouns: *amor*, *benevolentia*, *bonitas*, *fides*, *humanitas*, *modestia*, *prudentia*, *studium*.

Also used by: M. Claudius Marcellus (*Fam.* 4.11.1; SB 232), L. Cornelius Balbus and C. Oppius (*Att.* 9.7B.2; SB 174B), C. Matius (*Fam.* 11.28.1; SB 349), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.17.3; SB 398; *Fam.* 10.23.4; SB 414), Cn. Pompeius Magnus (*Att.* 8.11C.1; SB 161C).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.9.4 (SB 20), *Fam.* 2.7.4 (SB 107), *Fam.* 2.14 (SB 89), *Fam.* 3.2.1 (SB 65), *Fam.* 3.10.3 (SB 73), *Fam.* 4.3.1 (SB 202), *Fam.* 5.8.4 (SB 25), *Fam.* 7.17.2 (SB 31), *Fam.* 9.11.1 (SB 250), *Fam.* 9.25.2 (SB 114), *Fam.* 10.29.1 (SB 426), *Fam.* 11.8.1 (SB 360), *Fam.* 13.7.2 (SB 320), *Fam.* 13.15.1 and 3 (SB 317), *Fam.* 13.16.4 (SB 316), *Fam.* 13.21.2 (SB 287), *Fam.* 13.27.4 (SB 293), *Fam.* 13.54 (SB 132), *Fam.* 13.63.1 (SB 137), *Fam.* 15.8 (SB 100), *Att.* 7.1.2 (SB 124), *Att.* 15.14.2 (SB 402), *ad Brut.* 1.12.3 (SB 21).

##### (b) *incredibilis*

Used in polite combination with the nouns: *amor*, *benevolentia*, *fides*, *gratiae*, *laetitia*, *virtus*, *voluptas*.

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.9.4 (SB 20), *Fam.* 2.1.2 (SB 45), *Fam.* 2.7.4 (SB 107), *Fam.* 5.7.1 (SB 3), *Fam.* 5.12.1 (SB 22), *Fam.* 7.17.2 (SB 31), *Fam.* 10.5.1

(SB 359), *Fam.* 10.12.2 and 5 (SB 377), *Fam.* 13.27.2 (SB 293), *Fam.* 13.54 (SB 132), *Fam.* 13.64.1 (SB 138), *Fam.* 14.1.1 (SB 8), *Fam.* 15.12.1 (SB 102). Cf. *incredibiliter delector / gaudeo*: *Fam.* 3.9.3 (SB 72), *Q. Fr.* 2.14.1 (SB 18), *ad Brut.* 2.4.6 (SB 4).

(c) *mirifice / mirabiliter / mirificus*

Also used by: C. Cassius Longinus (*Fam.* 12.12.1 and 4; SB 387).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.11.3 (SB 74), *Fam.* 9.10.1 (SB 217), *Fam.* 10.3.2 (SB 355), *Fam.* 10.19.1 (SB 393), *Fam.* 11.14.1 (SB 413), *Fam.* 13.6.2 (SB 57), *Fam.* 13.15.1 (SB 317), *Fam.* 15.10.1 (SB 108), *Att.* 12.34.2 (SB 273), *Att.* 16.16D (SB 407D).

(d) *valde and vehementer*

These two adverbs are rather less forceful and are employed in various ways in strategies of affiliative politeness (divided here into five broad categories). See also Abbott 1896; Orlandini 2003.

Also used by: C. Asinius Pollio (*Fam.* 10.31.6; SB 368), L. Cornelius Balbus (*Att.* 9.7B.1; SB 174B).

Used by Cicero

(i) to strengthen a conventional expression of thanks, e.g., *mihi valde gratum erit*: *Fam.* 3.6.6 (SB 69), *Fam.* 3.11.4 (SB 74), *Fam.* 6.11.2 (SB 224), *Fam.* 7.25.1 (SB 261), *Fam.* 12.17.1 (SB 204), *Fam.* 13.23.2 (SB 289), *Fam.* 13.37 (SB 308), *Fam.* 13.39 (SB 310), *Fam.* 13.41.2 (SB 54), *Fam.* 13.46 (SB 272).

(ii) to strengthen expressions of pleasure and approval, e.g., *vehementer gaudeo*: *Fam.* 2.18.1 (SB 115), *Fam.* 6.18.4 (SB 218), *Fam.* 7.1.5 (SB 24), *Fam.* 7.13.2 (SB 36), *Fam.* 7.15.2 (SB 39), *Fam.* 11.14.2 (SB 413), *Fam.* 11.21.5 (SB 411), *Fam.* 12.2.1 (SB 344), *Fam.* 12.25.2 (SB 373), *Fam.* 12.30.7 (SB 417).

(iii) to strengthen expressions of esteem and affection, e.g., *te valde amamus*: *Fam.* 2.13.2 (SB 93), *Fam.* 7.14.2 (SB 38), *Fam.* 13.22.1 (SB 288).

(iv) to strengthen phrases used in recommendations of a third party, e.g., *utor valde familiariter*: *Fam.* 1.3.1 (SB 56), *Fam.* 3.1.3 (SB 64), *Fam.* 13.9.2 (SB 139), *Fam.* 13.23.1 (SB 289), *Fam.* 13.31.1 (SB 302), *Fam.* 13.35.1 (SB 306).

(v) to strengthen a request for a favor, e.g., *vehementer peto ut*: *Fam.* 13.26.2 (SB 292), *Fam.* 13.28.2 (SB 294), *Fam.* 13.41.2 (SB 54), *Fam.* 13.44 (SB 270), *Fam.* 13.47 (SB 274), *Fam.* 13.56.3 (SB 131), *Fam.* 13.74 (SB 269), *Fam.* 13.76.2 (SB 62).

### (e) *mehercule(s)*

This expression has a colloquial flavor, occurring in the plays of Plautus (in syncopated form), but not in the more formal genres of literature (see Hofmann 1951: 29–30). It is used regularly, however, by a wide range of aristocrats in letters addressing various topics and matters of business. Its main effect is to add a sense of urgency and earnestness to a remark; in this respect, its basic function, as with other intensifiers, is affiliative.

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A; *Att.* 14.13A.2; SB 367A), C. Asinius Pollio (*Fam.* 10.32.4; SB 415), M. Caelius Rufus (*Fam.* 8.2.1; SB 78; *Fam.* 8.3.1; SB 79; *Fam.* 8.16.1; SB 153 = *Att.* 10.9A.1; SB 200A), C. Cassius Longinus (*Fam.* 15.19.1–3; SB 216), L. Cornelius Balbus (*Att.* 9.7B.1–3; SB 174B), C. Julius Caesar (*Att.* 9.7C.1; SB 174C), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.11.3; SB 382; *Fam.* 10.18.3; SB 395; *Fam.* 10.23.1 and 7; SB 414; *Fam.* 10.24.1 and 6; SB 428), P. Vatinius (*Fam.* 5.9.1; SB 255; *Fam.* 5.10A.1–2; SB 259).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.8.2 (SB 19), *Fam.* 2.4.1 (SB 48), *Fam.* 2.5.2 (SB 49), *Fam.* 2.13.2 (SB 93), *Fam.* 3.7.5 (SB 71), *Fam.* 3.8.7 (SB 70), *Fam.* 3.9.3 (SB 72), *Fam.* 5.8.2 (SB 25), *Fam.* 5.15.2 (SB 252), *Fam.* 7.5.1 (SB 26), *Fam.* 7.10.2 (SB 33), *Fam.* 9.10.1 (SB 217), *Fam.* 10.19.2 (SB 393), *Fam.* 11.6 (SB 343), *Fam.* 12.22A.1 (SB 357), *Fam.* 13.62 (SB 136), *Fam.* 13.75.1 (SB 60), *Fam.* 15.9.1 (SB 101), *Fam.* 15.17.4 (SB 214).

## 5. Congratulations

See Roesch 2004: 149.

Also used by: M. Caelius Rufus (*Fam.* 8.13.1; SB 94), P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (*Fam.* 1.7.7; SB 18), C. Julius Caesar (*Att.* 7.1.7; SB 124), Cn. Plancius (*Fam.* 4.14.1 and 3; SB 240), T. Pomponius Atticus (*Att.* 1.17.6; SB 17), P. Sestius (*Fam.* 5.6.2; SB 4), C. Trebonius (*Fam.* 12.16.1; SB 328), M. Tullius Cicero junior (*Fam.* 16.21.7; SB 337), Q. Tullius Cicero (*Fam.* 16.16.1; SB 44).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: (*gratulor*) *Fam.* 2.9.1 (SB 85), *Fam.* 3.12.1 (SB 75), *Fam.* 6.11.1 (SB 224), *Fam.* 6.12.1 (SB 226), *Fam.* 6.15.1 (SB 322), *Fam.* 9.14.7

(SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.7 (SB 371A), *Fam.* 13.73.1 (SB 273), *Fam.* 15.14.3 (SB 106); (*gratulatio*) *Fam.* 2.7.1 (SB 107), *Fam.* 9.14.7 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.7 (SB 371A).

For face-to-face congratulations, see L. Julius Caesar (*Fam.* 9.14.3; SB 326 = *Att.* 14.17A.3; SB 371A) and the encounters on Cicero's return from exile in September 57 BC (*Att.* 4.1.4–5; SB 73).

## 6. Assertions of Goodwill

See Hellegouarc'h 1972: 149–50 (*benevolentia*); 174–76 (*studium*); 183 (*voluntas*).

### (a) *benevolentia*

(i) Direct assertion of writer's *benevolentia* toward addressee

Also used by: L. Cornelius Balbus (*Att.* 9.7B.3; SB 174B), M. Junius Brutus (*ad Brut.* 1.6.1; SB 12), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.5.1; SB 359; *Fam.* 10.11.3; SB 382).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.5A.1 (SB 15), *Fam.* 3.1.1 (SB 64), *Fam.* 3.7.6 (SB 71), *Fam.* 3.10.3 (SB 73), *Fam.* 3.12.4 (SB 75), *Fam.* 4.8.2 (SB 229), *Fam.* 5.16.1 (SB 187), *Fam.* 6.2.1 (SB 245), *Fam.* 6.4.4 (SB 244), *Fam.* 6.10A.3 (SB 223), *Fam.* 6.14.1 (SB 228), *Fam.* 7.6.1 (SB 27), *Fam.* 10.6.3 (SB 370), *Fam.* 10.27.1; SB 369), *Fam.* 11.29.2 (SB 335), *Fam.* 12.2.3 (SB 344).

(ii) Acknowledgment of addressee's *benevolentia* toward writer

Also used by: C. Cassius Longinus and M. Junius Brutus (*Fam.* 11.2.1; SB 329), M. Claudius Marcellus (*Fam.* 4.11.1; SB 232), P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (*Fam.* 1.7.1; SB 18; *Fam.* 1.9.1; SB 20), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.17.3; SB 398).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.9.1 (SB 72), *Fam.* 4.7.1 (SB 230), *Fam.* 5.8.3 (SB 25), *Fam.* 5.13.1 (SB 201), *Fam.* 5.19.2 (SB 152), *Fam.* 15.4.16 (SB 110), *Fam.* 15.8 (SB 100).

(iii) Invoked in requests for favors

Also used by: C. Julius Caesar (*Att.* 10.8B.1; SB 199B), M. Junius Brutus (*ad Brut.* 1.13.1; SB 20).



Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 6.22.2 (SB 221), *Fam.* 13.4.4 (SB 318), *Fam.* 13.7.5 (SB 320), *Fam.* 15.15.4 (SB 174).

### (b) *studium*

(i) Assertion of writer's *studium* for addressee

Also used (in aggrieved manner) by: Q. Caecilius Metellus Celer (*Fam.* 5.1.1; SB 1).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.4.1 (SB 67), *Fam.* 3.10.5 (SB 73), *Fam.* 3.12.3 (SB 75), *Fam.* 3.13.2 (SB 76), *Fam.* 5.11.1 (SB 257), *Fam.* 6.14.1 (SB 228), *Fam.* 7.11.3 (SB 34), *Fam.* 10.29.1 (SB 426), *Fam.* 12.24.1 (SB 361).

(ii) Acknowledgment of addressee's *studium* for writer

Also used by: P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (*Fam.* 1.9.1; SB 20), Q. Minucius Thermus (*Fam.* 2.18.1; SB 115), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.20.3; SB 407).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.9.3 (SB 72), *Fam.* 15.12.2 (SB 102), *Att.* 14.13B.1 (SB 367B).

### (c) *voluntas*

*voluntas* is sometimes employed in a neutral sense, without any indication whether the writer's disposition is positive or negative, e.g., *Fam.* 8.1.3 (SB 77). On other occasions, however, *voluntas* is narrowed in meaning to refer specifically to a "friendly disposition" (see *OLD*, s.v. 8b). In such cases, it means much the same as *benevolentia*.

(i) Assertion of writer's *voluntas* for addressee

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.2.1 (SB 65), *Fam.* 5.2.10 (SB 2), *Fam.* 5.11.1 (SB 257).

(ii) Request for addressee to maintain his existing *voluntas* toward writer

Used by: Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos (*Fam.* 5.3.2; SB 11).

## 7. Requests and Promises to Protect a Correspondent's *dignitas* (*amplitudo*, *existimatio*)

See Hellegouarc'h 1972: 362 and 388–408.

*(a) dignitas*(i) Request for addressee to support the writer's *dignitas*

Also used by: C. Cassius Longinus (*Fam.* 12.12.2; SB 387), P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther the younger (*Fam.* 12.14.4; SB 405), Q. Cornificius (*Fam.* 12.17.3; SB 204), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.7.2; SB 372; *Fam.* 10.17.3; SB 398; *Fam.* 10.21A; SB 392), P. Vatinius (*Fam.* 5.9.1; SB 255). Elegant variations by Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus at *Fam.* 11.4.1 (SB 342) and L. Munatius Plancus at *Fam.* 10.9.2 (SB 379).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: see the variation *meaque omnia tuebere* at *Fam.* 11.29.3 (SB 335).

(ii) Assertion of support for addressee's *dignitas*

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A), Appius Claudius Pulcher (*Fam.* 3.9.1; SB 72).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 2.18.1 (SB 115), *Fam.* 3.4.1 (SB 67), *Fam.* 3.9.2 (SB 72), *Fam.* 5.8.1 (SB 25), *Fam.* 6.22.3 (SB 221), *Fam.* 10.1.3 (SB 340), *Fam.* 10.3.2 (SB 355), *Fam.* 10.10.2 (SB 375), *Fam.* 10.13.1 (SB 389), *Fam.* 11.5.3 (SB 353), *Fam.* 11.6A.2 (SB 356), *Fam.* 11.8.2 (SB 360), *Fam.* 12.22.2 (SB 346), *Fam.* 13.68.3 (SB 211), *Fam.* 13.77.1 (SB 212). Elegant variations at *Fam.* 11.6 (SB 343) and *Fam.* 12.7.1 (SB 367); used in aggrieved fashion at *Fam.* 5.5.2 (SB 5).

*(b) existimatio*(i) Request for addressee to support the writer's *existimatio*

Also used by: Q. Cornificius (*Fam.* 12.17.3; SB 204).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 15.10.2 (SB 108), *Fam.* 15.13.3 (SB 109).

(ii) Assertion of support for addressee's *existimatio*

Also used by: M. Caelius Rufus (*Fam.* 8.3.2; SB 79), M. Tullius Tiro (*Fam.* 16.21.2; SB 337).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.4.1 (SB 67), *Fam.* 13.77.1 (SB 212).

*(c) amplitudo*(i) Assertion of support for addressee's *amplitudo*

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.9.2 (SB 72), *Fam.* 5.8.3 and 5 (SB 25), *Fam.* 11.5.3 (SB 353).

## 8. Assertions of Affection and Esteem

See Roesch 2004: 147; Hellegouarc'h 1972: 142–46 and 207.

(a) *amo, amor (and variants)*:(i) assertion of writer's *amor* for addressee

Also used by: L. Cornelius Balbus (*Att.* 9.7B.3; SB 174B), Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus (*Fam.* 11.20.1; SB 401), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.9.1; SB 379), Q. Tullius Cicero (*Fam.* 16.16.2; SB 44).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.1.4 (SB 12), *Fam.* 1.7.9 (SB 18), *Fam.* 1.9.4 (SB 20), *Fam.* 2.1.2 (SB 45), *Fam.* 2.2 (SB 46), *Fam.* 2.4.2 (SB 48), *Fam.* 3.12.4 (SB 75), *Fam.* 6.12.1 (SB 226), *Fam.* 6.15.1 (SB 322), *Fam.* 7.1.6 (SB 24), *Fam.* 7.2.1 (SB 52), *Fam.* 9.10.1 (SB 217), *Fam.* 9.14.4 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.4 (SB 371A), *Fam.* 9.16.1 (SB 190), *Fam.* 10.1.2 (SB 340), *Fam.* 10.3.2 (SB 355), *Fam.* 11.21.1 (SB 411), *Fam.* 11.27.2 (SB 348), *Fam.* 13.29.1 (SB 282), *Fam.* 15.20.2 (SB 208), *Att.* 1.17.1 (SB 17), *Att.* 14.13B.1 (SB 367B).

(ii) acknowledgment of addressee's *amor* for writer

Also used by: C. Cassius Longinus (*Fam.* 12.12.1; SB 387), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.4.1; SB 358; *Fam.* 10.21A; SB 392; *Fam.* 10.23.7; SB 414; *Fam.* 10.24.1; SB 428).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.3.1 (SB 56), *Fam.* 1.9.1 (SB 20), *Fam.* 2.1.1 (SB 45), *Fam.* 3.1.2 (SB 64), *Fam.* 3.9.1 (SB 72), *Fam.* 4.15.1 (SB 241), *Fam.* 5.15.1 (SB 252), *Fam.* 5.20.9 (SB 128), *Fam.* 7.23.1 (SB 209), *Fam.* 9.11.1 (SB 250), *Fam.* 10.5.1 (SB 359), *Fam.* 11.29.3 (SB 335), *Fam.* 15.21.2 (SB 207), *Fam.* 16.9.3 (SB 127), *Att.* 6.1.1 (SB 115).

(iii) acknowledgment of mutual *amor* between writer and addressee

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 6.5.4 (SB 239), *Fam.* 7.14.2 (SB 38), *Fam.* 10.10.2 (SB 375), *Fam.* 12.1.2 (SB 327), *Fam.* 12.17.3 (SB 204), *Fam.* 12.29.1 (SB 433), *Fam.* 13.47 (SB 274).

## (iv) invoked in requests

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 5.18.1 (SB 51), *Fam.* 12.22A.1 (SB 357), *Fam.* 13.29.5 (SB 282), *Fam.* 13.44 (SB 270), *Fam.* 13.47 (SB 274), *Fam.* 13.74 (SB 269), *Fam.* 13.75.2 (SB 60).

*(b) te habeo carum (and variants):*

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A), C. Cassius Longinus (*Fam.* 12.12.4; SB 387), Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus (*Fam.* 11.20.2; SB 401), L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.23.7; SB 414).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.8.6 (SB 19), *Fam.* 1.9.24 (SB 20), *Fam.* 2.10.1 (SB 86), *Fam.* 3.1.1 (SB 64), *Fam.* 3.4.1 (SB 67), *Fam.* 11.6 (SB 343), *Fam.* 12.30.7 (SB 417), *Fam.* 13.1.5 (SB 63), *Fam.* 14.3.5 (SB 9), *Att.* 5.1.5 (SB 94).

Cf. *mihi carissime* (in direct address) Also used by: C. Cassius Parmensis (*Fam.* 12.13.1; SB 419), M. Junius Brutus (*ad Brut.* 1.4.3; SB 10). Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 11.21.3 (SB 411), *Q. Fr.* 2.6.4 (SB 10), *Q. Fr.* 3.4.6 (SB 24), *Q. Fr.* 3.6.6 (SB 26).

*(c) diligo*

## (i) writer's assertion of esteem for addressee

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A), C. Matius (*Fam.* 11.28.8; SB 349).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 2.9.3 (SB 85), *Fam.* 6.14.1 (SB 228), *Fam.* 11.27.2 (SB 348), *Fam.* 13.4.1 (SB 318), *Att.* 1.17.4 (SB 17), *ad Brut.* 1.1.2 (SB 13).

## (ii) acknowledgment of addressee's esteem for writer

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.4.1 (SB 67), *Fam.* 11.27.2 (SB 348), *Fam.* 11.29.2 (SB 335), *Fam.* 13.29.1 (SB 282).

*(d) te pluris / plurimi facio*

## (i) Assertion of esteem for addressee

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.4.2 (SB 67), *Fam.* 15.14.2 (SB 106).

## (ii) Acknowledgment of addressee's esteem for writer

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.4.1 (SB 67), *Fam.* 7.31.1 (SB 267).

9. *Mi* with Direct Address

See Adams 1978: 162–63, Deniaux 1993: 83–84, Shackleton Bailey 1995: 9–10, Dickey 2002: 217–24.

(a) *Used by the following correspondents  
when addressing Cicero:*

- M. Aemilius Lepidus: *Fam.* 10.34A.2 (SB 400)  
 M. Antonius: *Att.* 10.8A.2 (SB 199A)  
 A. Caecina: *Fam.* 6.7.5 (SB 237)  
 L. Cornelius Balbus: *Att.* 9.7B.1 (SB 174B), *Att.* 9.13A.2 (SB 181A)  
 P. Cornelius Dolabella: *Fam.* 9.9.1 and 3 (SB 157)  
 M'. Curius: *Fam.* 7.29.1 (SB 264)  
 L. Munatius Plancus: *Fam.* 10.4.2 (SB 358), *Fam.* 10.9.2 (SB 379), *Fam.* 10.11.3 (SB 382), *Fam.* 10.21.6 (SB 391), *Fam.* 10.23.6 and 7 (SB 414), *Fam.* 10.24.5 (SB 428)  
 C. Trebonius: *Fam.* 12.16.1 (SB 328)  
 Q. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 16.16.1 (SB 44)  
 P. Vatinius: *Fam.* 5.10A.2 (SB 259), *Fam.* 5.10B (SB 258)

Also M. Tullius Cicero junior to M. Tullius Tiro: *Fam.* 16.21.2 and 7 (SB 337)

(b) *Used by Cicero in his letters to the following  
correspondents:*

- T. Ampius Balbus: *Fam.* 6.12.1 (SB 226)  
 M. Antonius: *Att.* 14.13B.3 (SB 367B)  
 C. Ateius Capito: *Att.* 16.16C.3 (SB 407C)  
 M. Caelius Rufus: *Fam.* 2.9.3 (SB 85), *Fam.* 2.12.2 (SB 95)  
 P. Cornelius Dolabella: *Fam.* 9.14.1 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A.1, 3, 4, and 8 (SB 371A), *Att.* 15.14.2 (SB 402)  
 Q. Cornificius: *Fam.* 12.25.2 and 5 (SB 373), *Fam.* 12.29.3 (SB 433), *Fam.* 12.30.3 (SB 417)  
 C. Cupiennius: *Att.* 16.16D.1 (SB 407D)  
 M. Fabius Gallus: *Fam.* 7.24.1 (SB 260), *Fam.* 7.25.2 (SB 261)  
 C. Furnius: *Fam.* 10.26.2 (SB 424)  
 C. Julius Caesar: *Fam.* 7.5.3 (SB 26)  
 D. Junius Brutus Albinus: *Fam.* 11.14.1 (SB 413), *Fam.* 11.15.2 (SB 422), *Fam.* 11.18.1 (SB 397), *Fam.* 11.21.1 (SB 411)  
 [Q. Marcius?] Rex: *Fam.* 13.52 (SB 312); see Deniaux 1993: 417–18  
 C. Munatius Plancus: see L. Plotius Plancus  
 L. Munatius Plancus: *Fam.* 10.1.1 (SB 340), *Fam.* 10.5.2 (SB 359), *Fam.* 10.10.2 (SB 375), *Fam.* 10.14.2 (SB 384), *Fam.* 10.19.2 (SB 393), *Fam.* 10.20.2 (SB 407), *Fam.* 13.29.5 (SB 282)  
 C. Oppius: *Fam.* 11.29.3 (SB 335)

- L. Papirius Paetus: *Fam.* 9.16.2 (SB 190), *Fam.* 9.17.1 (SB 195), *Fam.* 9.21.2 (SB 188), *Fam.* 9.24.1, 3, and 4 (SB 362), *Fam.* 9.25.3 (SB 114)
- L. Plotius Plancus (= C. Munatius Plancus): *Att.* 16.16A.4 (SB 407A), *Att.* 16.16E.1 (SB 407E)
- T. Pomponius Atticus: *Att.* 6.1.20 (SB 115), *Att.* 6.6.4 (SB 121), *Att.* 10.8.6 (SB 199), *Att.* 12.19.4 (SB 257), *Att.* 13.31.4 (SB 302), *Att.* 13.38.2 (SB 341), *Att.* 14.17.5 (SB 371), *Att.* 14.20.3 (SB 374), *Att.* 15.20.2 (SB 397), *Att.* 16.7.3 (SB 415)
- C. Scribonius Curio: *Fam.* 2.7.4 (SB 107)
- M. Terentius Varro: *Fam.* 9.8.2 (SB 254)
- C. Trebatius Testa: *Fam.* 7.16.1 (SB 32), *Fam.* 7.13.1 (SB 36), *Fam.* 7.21 (SB 332), *Fam.* 7.20.2 (SB 333)
- C. Trebonius: *Fam.* 15.20.2 (SB 208)
- Q. Tullius Cicero: *Q Fr.* 1.3.1 (SB 3), *Q Fr.* 1.4.1 (SB 4), *Q Fr.* 2.3.7 (SB 7), *Q Fr.* 2.6.3–4 (SB 10), *Q Fr.* 2.15.2 (SB 19)
- M. Tullius Tiro: *Fam.* 16.1.2 (SB 120), *Fam.* 16.3.2 (SB 122), *Fam.* 16.4.2, 3 and 4 (SB 123), *Fam.* 16.6.2 (SB 125), *Fam.* 16.9.4 (SB 127), *Fam.* 16.20 (SB 220), *Fam.* 16.22.2 (SB 185)
- P. Volumnius Eutrapelus: *Fam.* 7.32.3 (SB 113), *Fam.* 7.33.1 (SB 192)

See also *Fam.* 11.17.2 (SB 435). The recipient of this letter is given by the manuscript tradition as Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus. As Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 571–72 argues, however, its close similarity in content to *Fam.* 11.16 (SB 434), which is also addressed to Decimus Brutus on the same topic, may require us to find a different addressee. His suggestion is M. Junius Brutus. Cicero in fact generally eschews the use of *mi* with Brutus during this period; see Shackleton Bailey 1995: 10. Nevertheless, the brief and conventionalized form of this particular letter may account for its use here; cf. Harvey 1991: 17, n. 36. It is not impossible, however, that Cicero sent two separate letters to Decimus Brutus.

# 10. *velim persuadeas / existimes*

See Roesch 2004: 145–46.

## (a) *tibi persuadeas velim (and variants)*

Also used by: M. Antonius (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A), M. Porcius Cato (*Fam.* 15.5.3; SB 111).

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 1.8.6 (SB 19), *Fam.* 3.2.2 (SB 65), *Fam.* 5.8.3 (SB 25), *Fam.* 6.20.3 (SB 247), *Fam.* 7.10.4 (SB 33), *Fam.* 9.13.2 (SB 311), *Fam.* 11.5.3 (SB 353), *Fam.* 11.6A.2 (SB 356), *Fam.* 11.17.2 (SB 435), *Fam.* 11.21.4 (SB 411), *Fam.* 12.1.2 (SB 327), *Fam.* 12.30.7 (SB 417), *Fam.* 13.1.6 (SB 63), *Fam.* 15.4.11 and 16 (SB 110), *Att.* 2.22.5 (SB 42), *Att.* 14.13B.5 (SB 367B).

See also *persuade tibi* used by: L. Munatius Plancus (*Fam.* 10.4.2 and 3; SB 358), M. Tullius Cicero (*Fam.* 3.1.1; SB 64). Cf. *cura ut...tibi persuadeas* used by M. Tullius Cicero at *Att.* 1.5.8 (SB 1).

(b) *velim existimes*

Used by M. Tullius Cicero: *Fam.* 3.7.6 (SB 71), *Fam.* 5.2.6 (SB 2), *Fam.* 5.8.3 and 5 (SB 25), *Fam.* 5.16.6 (SB 187), *Fam.* 5.20.1 (SB 128), *Fam.* 6.1.7 (SB 242), *Fam.* 6.10B.3 (SB 222), *Fam.* 12.6.2 (SB 376), *Fam.* 12.17.3 (SB 204), *Fam.* 12.29.2 (SB 433), *Fam.* 13.57.2 (SB 133), *Fam.* 13.65.2 (SB 134), *Fam.* 13.72.2 (SB 300).

# Notes

## INTRODUCTION

1. See Brunt 1965: 20; also Brunt 1988: 381.
2. See, e.g., Adams 1978; Deniaux 1993; Beard 2002: 134–43; Dickey 2002; Adams 2003: 308–47.
3. Miller 1914 focuses primarily on the prescriptive elements of social etiquette that can be gleaned from the correspondence. Kroll 1963: 196–203 (in a work first published in 1933) makes some perceptive observations, but these are relatively brief. More recent studies include Schuricht 1994 and Roesch 2004, both of which are limited in their scope. See also the comments of Hutchinson 1998: 17–18. Several recent studies have pursued rather different theoretical approaches to Cicero's letters; see, e.g., Leach 1999 and 2006; Rauzy 2003; Biville 2003; Gunderson 2007. Cf. Earle 1999: 1–2 on the potential for fictional “epistolary selves.”
4. On occasion in the letters, Cicero uses the noun *humanitas* and its cognates to refer to one person's concern for the feelings of another, or in the sense of sophisticated manners; see, e.g., *Fam.* 7.27.2 (SB 148), *Q Fr.* 2.9.1 (SB 12), *Fam.* 1.7.3 (SB 18). But the meaning of *humanitas* (both in the letters and elsewhere) extends much further than this, and it would be mistaken to regard the word as a suitable translation of our term. See *TLL* vol. VI, cols. 3077–80, s.v. *humanitas*.
5. On the origins and development of the English word “politeness,” see Watts 2003: 34–46.
6. On the meaning and nuance of ἀκοινονόητον, see *LSJ*, s.v. ἀκοινονόητος: “lacking in *savoir-faire*.” Cf. Tyrrell and Purser 1890: 174. For Cicero's use of a Greek rather than Latin word in this context, see Adams 2003: 333.
7. See *Att.* 6.1.7 (SB 115) where Brutus is described as writing *contumaciter, adroganter*, ἀκοινονοήτως (“in a swaggering, arrogant and uncivil manner”). The



adverbs here confirm that Cicero's complaint is not with the content of Brutus' letters, but with their manner. Relations between the two men were strained at this time as a result of Brutus' money-lending activities in Cyprus and Cicero's position as provincial governor. See *Att.* 5.21.10–13 (SB 114), *Att.* 6.1.2–6 (SB 115), and the discussion by Braund 1989.

8. The development of modern "politeness theory" derives ultimately from the interest in linguistic pragmatics that began in the 1960s. The identification and study of speech-acts by Austin 1962 and Searle 1969 represent one well known development from this period; see also the "conversational principles" of Grice 1975 and 1978. For a good introduction to pragmatics, see Mey 1993: 22–25 and 196–98.

9. Holmes 2001: 268. Watts 2003: 50–53 provides a convenient summary of the problems involved in defining politeness.

10. Lakoff 1975: 64.

11. See e.g., Humphry 1897: 2; 6–7; Sifianou 1992: 83.

12. See Brown and Levinson 1978 and 1987. The latter work presents unchanged and in book form the main text of the 1978 study, together with a new introductory chapter. For the impact of Brown and Levinson's theory, see the bibliographies in e.g., Kasper 1990, DuFon et al. 1994 and O'Driscoll 1996; also Watts 2003: 107–16.

13. Goffman 1955: 213; convenient reprints available in Goffman 1967, 1969 and 1972. For useful introductions to the works of Goffman, see Manning 1992 and Branaman 1997. For an application of some of Goffman's concepts to Pliny's letters, see Ludolph 1997: 29–36.

14. See Goffman 1955: 214–17.

15. See Goffman 1971: 62–186. Cf. Manning 1992: 38–39: "Instead of analyzing people as calculative manipulators seeking personal gain, [Goffman's early works] suggest that we are all guardians of face-to-face situations. The motive for behavior is no longer to maximize personal gain but to protect social situations."

16. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 61–62; 101–29. Their classification draws heavily on the discussion by Goffman 1971: 62–186 of "supportive" and "remedial" interchanges.

17. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 26; 153.

18. For a useful discussion of facework, see Tracy 1990. Again, the basic concepts were first formulated by Goffman 1955 and 1963. See Bryson 1998: 210–30 for examples of reactions against polite manners on the grounds of their supposedly empty and highly ritualized nature.

19. See Goffman 1971: 64. Cf. Manning 1992: 5: "One of the major legacies of Goffman's work is that it shows us how the fragility of day-to-day life is lent solidity and order by small gestures and ritual offerings."

20. The significance of their model is best appreciated by considering the state of politeness studies immediately before and after the publication of their work. For a scholar such as Leech 1983, the notion of face scarcely registered as an element to be considered in the discussion of politeness. Instead he pursued a path that involved the proliferation of maxims (e.g., the "tact maxim," "generosity maxim," "approbation maxim," "modesty maxim" and so on; see esp. p. 132). Without the work of Brown and Levinson, politeness studies may well have progressed along very different (and less productive) lines.

21. See, e.g., Schrijvers 1993: 75–90; Oliensis 1998: 4–16; Lloyd 1999: 33–45; Dickey 2002: 17–19; 222; Roesch 2004; Kaster 2005: 42–43; 166, n. 45. Pragmatics and politeness theory have also been applied to epistolary material in English; see Fitzmaurice 2002: 44.

22. The unmethodical and rather arbitrary nature of their data collection was a prime target for critics and prompted an embarrassed acknowledgment in the introduction to the later version of their study. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 11: “ours was an unholy amalgam of naturally occurring, elicited, and intuitive data (which would have mattered less if it had been more clearly distinguished).” Almost all their data are presented as conversational in origin.

23. Cf. Roesch 2004: 142–43. Brown and Levinson’s claim to universality is best understood as a product of the trends in anthropological inquiry at this time. See, e.g., Metcalf and Huntington 1991: 10, who note that the identification of universals in human behavior constituted at this time a “large part of the program of contemporary anthropology.”

24. For the notion of “ceremony” in personal interaction, see Goffman 1955.

25. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 129–227 on negative politeness and 101–28 on positive politeness. Note also their remark at 129–30: “When we think of politeness in Western cultures it is negative-politeness behaviour that springs to mind.”

26. Schmidt 1980: 104. Some scholars in fact claim that the notion of negative face is unknown in certain communities because of their strong cultural ethos toward social cooperation. See, e.g., Matsumoto 1988; Nwoye 1992: 311; Mao 1994; Watts 2003: 102–3.

27. Brown and Levinson 1987: 178.

28. Cf. Bryson 1998: 88: “in a society acutely conscious of hierarchy and degree, ‘ceremony’ was extremely important and could be enormously complex.” See also Coulmas 1992.

29. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 22–25 in which it is tacitly acknowledged that honorific remarks are not fully addressed in their original essay.

30. Brown and Levinson 1987: 65–68.

31. See the good comments of Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1992: 169–71; 177–80.

32. See Goffman 1971: 62–186.

33. Kaster 2005: 15.

34. A person may blush, for example, when placed in an awkward or embarrassing situation, a response that shows an appropriate awareness of the social delicacies of the moment. Cf. Kaster 2005: 13–27 and 153–54; note also Cicero’s use of the term *erubescit* at *Fam.* 5.12.1 (SB 22).

35. See Kaster 2005: 15 on this aspect of *verecundia*.

36. Lossmann 1962: 96.

37. This face-to-face context is made explicit in the phrase *quibuscum sermonem conferemus* at *Off.* 1.136. As Dyck 1996: 310 notes: “In general the emphasis in this passage is on the smooth functioning of relaxed *sermo* in small circles of friends.”

38. This topic has been discussed in some detail by modern scholars. See Babl 1893: 17–19; Pease 1902; Dorey 1957–58; Adams 1978; Cugusi 1983: 47–56; Deniaux 1993: 75–83; Shackleton Bailey 1995: 1–10; Dickey 2002: 41–76; Trapp 2003: 34–36; Roesch 2004: 143–44. See also Hall 1998 on the deference-greeting in Roman society.

39. For address by a single name as a sign of familiarity, see *Fam.* 7.32.1 (SB 113) and Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 385; also Adams 1978: 145–46; Shackleton Bailey 1995: 142; Dickey 2002: 56–67.

40. Tiro was at this time a freedman, with the full name Marcus Tullius Tiro. See also *Dom.* 22; Adams 1978: 146 and 154.

41. Cicero in fact regularly uses this intimate form of greeting elsewhere in his letters to Tiro without any apparent awkwardness or embarrassment. The matter presumably only became an issue in this case because of the criticisms (or potential criticisms) of the outside party; see Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 385 and 1995: 153–54. On the question of the authenticity of the extant headings of the letters, see Shackleton Bailey 1995: 142–43.

42. Note that Cicero himself had reservations about the candid nature of the discussions between his brother Quintus and his freedman Statius; see *Att.* 6.2.2 (SB 116).

43. See also Cicero's concern at *Att.* 10.11.5 (SB 202) that his joking use of an epistolary title might have caused offense.

44. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 74–84 for the concept of social distance; cf. Holtgraves and Yang 1990: 720; Lossmann 1962: 96.

45. See Laver 1981: 290–91; Ferguson 1994.

46. Cf. Holmes 2001: 251: “The way people talk in court, in school, at business meetings and at graduation ceremonies reflects the formality of those contexts and the social roles people take in them.”

47. Wardhaugh 2002: 51. On linguistic register, see also Halliday 1978: 31–32; Thornborrow 1999: 59–60.

48. For this framework, see Adams 1978: 164. Cf. Trapp 2003: 14, who notes that Cicero in his letters consciously works at “many different levels of formality.” See also Biville 2003: 24–25.

49. Cf. Wardhaugh 2002: 51, who notes that it is often difficult to “characterize discrete levels of formality.”

50. Cf. Wardhaugh 2002: 51: “We may try to relate the level of formality chosen to a variety of factors: the kind of occasion; the various social, age, and other differences that exist between the participants; the particular task that is involved, e.g., writing or speaking; the emotional involvement of one or more of the participants; and so on.”

51. For this categorization, see, e.g., von Albrecht 1973: col. 1284 and 2003: 68–71. Note that, according to Hutchinson 1998: 10, a letter's “metricality” does not get us very far in helping to establish its level of formality: “[t]o all correspondents except Atticus, his wife Terentia, and his freedman Tiro, Cicero normally writes rhythmic letters.” Contrast the earlier study of Bornecque 1898, and see the criticisms of Hutchinson 1998: 10, n. 13.

52. For attempts at categorizing ancient letters, see, e.g., Cugusi 1983: 106–35 and 1989: 395–400; Ludolph 1997: 23–28. On Pliny's letters, see Sherwin-White 1966: 42–45 and Gamberini 1983: 136–43; also Rosenmeyer 2001: 6–12 on ancient Greek letters. These categories certainly help us to get to grips with the vast range of material in the extant collections of letters, and to appreciate more easily their various purposes, but they do not provide an infallible guide to linguistic register.

53. This aspect of the correspondence has received close scholarly attention. See, e.g., Stinner 1879; Landgraf 1880; Tyrrell 1885: 56–73; Dammann 1910; Bignone 1946;

Monsuez 1952, 1953, 1954; von Albrecht 1973: cols. 1271–86, conveniently summarized in von Albrecht 2003: 52–71.

54. Cf. Hofmann 1951: 94. On the use of everyday vocabulary in (some of) the letters, see *Fam.* 9.21.1 (SB 188); *epistulas vero cottidianis verbis texere solemus*. (“As for letters, we weave them out of the language of everyday.”) Cf. Demetr. *Eloc.* 228–35; Trapp 2003: 180–83. As Biville 2003: 26–29 stresses, this familiar epistolary register retains a certain propriety that avoids colloquial vulgarity or looseness of expression.

55. See most conveniently the excellent discussion of Lendon 1997: 30–73, with its extensive references to both ancient and modern sources. Hellegouarc’h 1972: 362–424 and Wiseman 1985 also provide useful introductions. As Wiseman 1985: 16 notes: “The significant unit in Roman politics was not the family, not the ‘group,’ but the individual.” For an earlier version of some of the ideas presented in the following pages, see Hall 2005a.

56. Boissier 1897: 121.

57. See especially Cicero’s remarks at *Amic.* 34 where he claims that the *honoris certamen et gloriae* (“struggle for political position and reputation”) is a major source of *inimicitiae*. Cf. *Amic.* 76–78. For a good example, see *Fam.* 8.14.1 (SB 97) from M. Caelius to Cicero. See also Brunt 1965: 13–14 and 1988: 370–73; Epstein 1987.

58. On the influence of *invidia* and rivalry in politics, see, e.g., Q. Cic. *Comm. Pet.* 13–14; 40; 54; Hellegouarc’h 1972: 195–98; more generally, Kaster 2005: 84–103 and 180–87.

59. This function of language has been discussed to some extent by scholars of ancient Greek society. See, e.g., Kurke 1991: 86–87.

60. See Adams 2003: 316–19; 344–45. Cf. Dunkel 2000: 127.

61. The distinctive vocabulary of political friendship used in the letters has received detailed attention from scholars; see, e.g., Hellegouarc’h 1972: 142–85; Saller 1982: 8–22; Deniaux 1993: 83–108. As we shall see, however, the conventions of affiliative politeness in general extended a good deal further than these items of vocabulary.

62. For useful introductory discussions, see Taylor 1949: 1–24; Paterson 1985.

63. See, e.g., Hellegouarc’h 1972: 41–90; Brunt 1965 and 1988: 351–81; Konstan 1997: 122–29; Verboven 2002.

64. On the conventionalization of epistolary forms, see the good observations by Trapp 2003: 37.

65. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 70–71 and 129–30 for discussions of the conceptual basis of “negative face.”

66. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 70, who refer to the addressee’s “claims of territory and self-determination.” Negative politeness therefore (p. 129) “corresponds to Durkheim’s ‘negative rites,’ rituals of avoidance.”

67. One of Cicero’s aims in this scene is to present a model of sophisticated manners. See Leeman, Pinkster and Nelson 1985: 202–3 and 207–8; also Becker 1938: 18.

68. Saller 1994: 136, referring to Goffman 1967.

69. On the importance attributed to the distinction between patrician and plebeian, see, e.g., *Mur.* 15–18; *Sull.* 23; *Fam.* 9.21.2–3 (SB 188); on new men, Wiseman 1971a: 107–16; on *nobiles* see Gelzer 1969: 27–40 and Brunt 1982; a convenient summary of these issues is given by Rosenstein 2006.

70. Cf. Wiseman 1971a: 65–70, esp. 67: “The distinction between senators and *equites*, though intermittently of great political importance, tends to disguise the essential homogeneity of the moneyed class.” Cf. also Nicolet 1966: 70–71; 470; Brunt 1988: 147 (on *equites*).

71. On the daily wage of Roman laborers, see *Q. Rosc.* 28; *Cato Agr. Orig.* 22.3; cf. Frank 1933: 188–89. For the distinction between the wealthy and poor, see Whittaker 1993: 275–78 and Wiseman 1971a: 67. Cicero’s property toward the end of his life was probably worth around thirteen million sesterces; see Shatzman 1975: 403–25.

72. According to Deniaux 1993: 124–34, at least 23 of Cicero’s extant letters of recommendation are written on behalf of *equites* (and possibly as many as 34). The close interaction between senator and *equus* is also illustrated by the comments at *Q. Cic. Comm. Pet.* 18–24; 29; 33.

73. See, e.g., Neudling 1955: 126–29, 104–10 and 14–16 respectively on Catullus’ connections with C. Memmius (praetor in 58 B.C.), C. Asinius Pollio (praetor in 45 B.C.) and C. Licinius Macer Calvus, whose father was (probably) praetor in 68 B.C.; cf. Catull. 10, 12 and 50.

74. See Rawson 1971; Mitchell 1979: 1–9.

75. Achard 1991: 139.

76. See Weyssenhoff 1966 for a discussion of the non-extant letters that Cicero is known to have written.

77. See, e.g., *Q. Cic. Comm. Pet.* 16; 34–37 on the *salutatio*, and 29, 36, 43 and 54 on the forum; Deniaux 1993: 33; 264–65. On the dinner party, see, e.g., *Fam.* 7.16.2 (SB 32); *Hor. Epist.* 1.7.60–73; *Suet. Iul.* 73; *Plut. Cat. Mai.* 25; Kroll 1963: 190–96; D’Arms 1990: 319.

78. On the *nomenclator*, see Bernert 1936. Cicero mentions his own use of a *nomenclator* at *Att.* 4.1.5 (SB 73) and that of his brother Quintus at *Q. Fr.* 1.2.9 (SB 2); cf. also *Hor. Epist.* 1.6.49–54. On the imbalance in supply and demand in the system of patronage at Rome, see Wallace-Hadrill 1989: 72–73.

79. See Cugusi 1983: 154–57.

80. Nikitinski 2001 well notes the additional oral element that might form part of an epistolary exchange in Roman society. On occasions, a letter’s text would be supplemented by verbal remarks conveyed by the letter’s courier, especially if the courier was a trusted confidant.

81. Garzetti 1954: 51 mistakenly equates Plutarch’s phrase διὰ γραμμάτων with the Latin expression for cipher or code (*per notas*) used at *Suet. Iul.* 56.6. The Greek phrase simply means “by letter.” Cf. Warner 1958: 261.

82. *Prop.* 3.16.1; *Ov. Ars am.* 1.383; 2.395–96; 3.469–70; 3.619–30; cf. *Plut. Brut.* 5 and *Cat. Min.* 24 for Servilia sending a love-letter to Caesar while he was attending a meeting in the senate. Cornelius Nepos at *Att.* 20 states that the young Octavian frequently sent letters to Atticus while both were in Rome; but again their content is specifically noted as being relatively trivial. See also *Mart.* 14.6 on *triplices*, which were three-leaved tablets bound together and used to send messages or short poems to friends; Leary 1996: 61–63.

83. For giving thanks face-to-face, see *Fam.* 13.73.1 (SB 273); offering congratulations, see *Fam.* 9.14.3 (SB 326) = *Att.* 14.17A (SB 371A); offering pledges, *Att.* 2.22.2

(SB 42); *Att.* 16.5.2 (SB 410); effecting reconciliations, *Fam.* 1.9.20 (SB 20); Plut. *Cic.* 26. These passages are discussed further in chapter 1.

84. The current orthodoxy regards the *De Elocutione*, which contains a brief discussion of letter-writing, as belonging to the Late Hellenistic Period. See Trapp 2003: 43; also *OCD*, s.v. *Demetrius* no. 17. Bernard 2006: 69–70 suggests that Cicero may have been influenced by the *De Elocutione*, but it is difficult to identify any precise instances.

85. For the following text and translation, see Malherbe 1977: 30–31. The handbook is generally assigned to the second or first century B.C.; see *OCD*, s.v. *Demetrius* no. 15; Trapp 2003: 45.

86. Cf. Keyes 1935: 44, who asserts: “Cicero used some conventional Greek forms in his letters of introduction; probably he was acquainted with Greek handbooks of letter-writing.” Cotton 1984a argues at length against this claim. Cf. Trapp 2003: 45: “it rather looks as if theoretical discussion of [letter-writing] (as opposed to basic instruction) was not an entirely inevitable part of mainstream education.” On *De Inventione* and the study of rhetoric in Latin at this time, see the useful summary in Gaines 2007.

87. See Cugusi 1983: 151–57 on the nature of our extant letters from the pre-Ciceronian period; fragments presented in Cugusi 1970. For the storing and archiving of letters, see *Fam.* 7.25.1 (SB 261) and *Att.* 16.5.5 (SB 410), discussed by Small 1997: 50–52; also Shackleton Bailey 1965: 59–61; Cugusi 1989: 415–17. For recordkeeping and copying as a standard part of Roman business practice, see, e.g., *Verr.* 2.2.182–87.

88. The term *tirocinium fori* is an invention of modern scholarship; but for the phenomenon of aristocratic apprenticeship, see *Cael.* 9 on M. Caelius Rufus’ close association with Cicero and M. Crassus as a youth; also Tac. *Dial.* 34; Quint. *Inst.* 12.11.5.

89. The adjective *honorificus* is applied most often to senatorial speeches and decrees, that is, to offerings of respect made in a formal, public context. See, e.g., *Verr.* 2.2.122; *Deiot.* 10; Caes. *B Gall.* 1.43; Suet. *Iul.* 78.1; Plin. *Ep.* 3.4.3. It is also used in connection with other formal social rituals such as greetings and invitations; see, e.g., *Tusc.* 2.61; *Att.* 2.18.1 (SB 38); *Verr.* 2.4.138.

90. Sara is described as *contumacem*, Brutus as writing *contumaciter* (*Att.* 6.1.7; SB 115). Cf. the use of *contumacia* in connection with L. Gavius at *Att.* 6.3.6 (SB 117).

91. For a discussion of the younger Cicero’s language in *Fam.* 16.21 (SB 337), see Hall 2005a. Cicero took an active part in his son’s education generally, as well as that of his nephew; see *Att.* 8.4.1 (SB 156); *Part. or.* 1–2; *Q Fr.* 2.4.2 (SB 8). He also makes some comments to Atticus about his son’s epistolary style at *Att.* 14.7.2 (SB 361) and *Att.* 15.16 (SB 391). Plin. *Ep.* 4.13.3 provides an example of a youth accompanying his father to an aristocrat’s *salutatio*.

92. See *Amic.* 1; *Brut.* 306; *De or.* 2.1–5.

93. For a discussion of the passage as a whole, see the important study of Narducci 1989: 156–88.

94. For a discussion of the Greek sources, see Narducci 1989: 115–21 and Dyck 1996: 299–300. Cicero asserts at *Off.* 1.132 that no attempt to formulate guidelines for conversation has hitherto been attempted, although Varro seems to have discussed the subject at least briefly (*Gell. NA* 13.11). The satires of Lucilius provided a kind of instruction on how *not* to behave; see Ramage 1973: 45–51.

95. *Brut.* 210–11, where Cicero refers to other similar examples as well. Cf. *De or.* 3.45.

96. Cf. Bernard 2006: 68–69.

97. See, e.g., *Att.* 13.21A.2 (SB 327); *Att.* 13.22.3 (SB 329); Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.112. Weyssenhoff 1966: 16–17; 33–35; 82; also Austin 1945–46.

98. Terentia to Cicero, *Att.* 3.5 (SB 50); *Att.* 11.21.1 (SB 236); *Att.* 11.24.3 (SB 234); Tullia to Cicero, *Att.* 10.2.2 (SB 192); *Att.* 10.8.1 (SB 199); *Fam.* 14.2.4 (SB 7); Atticus to Tullia, *Att.* 11.24.1 (SB 234); Pomponia to Q. Cicero *filius*, *Att.* 13.39.1 (SB 342, with Orelli's emendation); *Att.* 13.41.1 (SB 344). See further Hemelrijk 1999: 345, n. 17, who also notes (189–90) that propriety would have circumscribed an aristocratic woman's range of correspondents.

99. Bowman 1998: 57 notes at least four likely female correspondents at Vindolanda (Claudia Severa, Sulpicia Lepidina, a certain Valatta, and perhaps a Paterna). Although they almost certainly used scribes, a few supplementary sentences in a different hand at the end of one of the letters confirms the basic literacy of Claudia Severa; see Bowman 1998: 88. For texts, see Bowman and Thomas 1994: 256–65 (frags. 291–94).

100. See Hemelrijk 1999: 193–96 for a convenient summary (with bibliography) of the main issues regarding the authenticity of these letters.

101. For the (usually informal) influence of women on Late Republican politics, see, e.g., Hillard 1989.

102. For this simple division, not intended as a careful or discerning categorization, see *Flac.* 37. Nicholson 1994 provides a good discussion of this subject as a whole.

103. See also *Fam.* 15.21.4 (SB 207), in which Cicero asserts that some letters are not intended for a wider readership.

104. See, e.g., *Fam.* 10.35 (SB 408); *Fam.* 12.15 (SB 406); *Fam.* 13.76 (SB 62); also *Att.* 7.17.2 (SB 141); *Att.* 8.2.1 (SB 152), *Att.* 8.9.1–2 (SB 188); Fernandes 1978.

105. See e.g., *Att.* 9.6A (SB 172A) and *Att.* 9.16.2–3 (SB 185) for letters from Caesar; *Att.* 8.11A (SB 161A) and *Att.* 8.12B (SB 162B) for letters from Pompey; *Att.* 10.8A (SB 199A) and *Att.* 14.13A (SB 367A) for letters from Antony.

106. Cf. Nicholson 1994: 58: “In that age before newspapers, we hear again and again of letters being freely circulated among Cicero's circles, either the originals or copies which were made specifically for the purpose of spreading news.” Cf. Hoffer 2003: 94.

107. For the notion of social performance, see Krostenko 2001. The development of a set of sophisticated ideals is a common feature of ruling elites throughout European history. See, e.g., Elias 1978: 187–91; Curtin 1985; Bryson 1998; and the useful overview in Watts 2003: 34–46. In the terms of Bourdieu 1977 and 1984, notions of sophisticated taste and discrimination regularly form a kind of cultural “capital” that can be employed in more or less benign ways to assert a person's social position and identity.

108. On *urbanitas*, see Ross 1969: 104–12; Quinn 1972: 210–18; Ramage 1973: 64–76; Narducci 1989: 156–68; Wray 2001: 124–29. Cf. Winterbottom 1976: 59: “Other names for [*urbanitas*] are snobbery, exclusiveness, class-consciousness, and xenophobia.”

109. Cf. the discussion of Griffin 1995.

110. Cf. Trapp 2003: 34. Cicero's depictions of witty, refined conversations in his dialogues serve a similar function. Only those of a certain wealth, taste and education had the wherewithal to converse knowledgeably on their country estates about

philosophical systems and rhetorical theory. See Becker 1938: 18–23; Zoll 1962: 126–39; Leeman and Pinkster 1981: 80–84. Castiglione's influential discussion of polite manners (*Il Cortegiano*, first published in 1516) draws heavily on the format and style of Cicero's dialogues, especially *De Oratore*; see Rebhorn 1983: 83–84. On linguistic in-groups, see Brown and Levinson 1987: 107–12; Ferguson 1994: 18.

111. This poem has, of course, generated a range of interpretations; for useful discussions and bibliography, see Fredricksmeyer 1973; Tatum 1988; Svarvarsson 1999.

112. Cf. Krostenko 2001: 177–87.

113. See Brown and Gilman 1960: 264–66; Curtin 1985: 405–8; Bryson 1998: 212–13.

114. Note that Cicero's advice in *De Officiis* regarding decorous behavior arises in the context of a serious discussion of ethics and so presents civility as a force for social good. Cf. Curtin 1985: 400; Narducci 1989: 119–24 and 141–42; Bryson 1998: 70.

115. See the fragments collected by Cugusi 1970.

116. Krostenko 2001: 3 and 22–31; cf. Ramage 1973: 35–51.

117. We need not conclude, as Kroll does, that their manipulation became any more cynical or devious during Cicero's time. See Kroll 1963: 197: "Schmeicheleien zu sagen, fiel dieser Zeit überaus leicht."

118. Although Cicero in his philosophical and rhetorical dialogues presents men from previous generations conversing in a sophisticated and genteel fashion, it is difficult to gauge the degree of anachronism at work here. On occasions, Cicero depicted these figures as possessing more specialized knowledge than they actually had; see, e.g., Jones 1939, Meyer 1970; Leeman and Pinkster 1981: 90–96. But the portrayal of their refined manners *in general* is a rather different matter.

119. See Guillemin 1929: 128 on the continuity in these elements of Roman public life and patronage; also Saller 1982: 119–43. For recommendations and requests, see, e.g., Plin. *Ep.* 2.13; 3.2; 4.4; 4.15; 4.28; 7.33; cf. also 4.12.1; 6.9.1. For thanks, appreciation and congratulations, 3.5.1; 3.18.4; 4.8.1; 5.3.1; 6.26.1; 7.23.1; 9.40.1.

120. For *diligo*, see, e.g., Plin. *Ep.* 2.13.5; 3.15.2; 4.4.1; 7.16.1. For *amo*, 2.7.6; 2.13.7; 3.3.5; 4.15.1; 6.26.2.

121. Forms of *obligo* are used more frequently than in Cicero when referring to favors. See, e.g., Plin. *Ep.* 2.13.1; 4.4.2; 4.15.4; 6.23.4; 7.7.1; 7.31.7. The term *reverentia* is used more frequently as a means of expressing esteem: 3.8.1; 4.15.12; 7.11.3; 10.26.1; 10.86A. Several different adverbs are used as intensifiers: see *effuse* (6.26.2) and *effusissime* (7.30.1); *validissime* (3.15.2 and 4.4.1); *artissime* (6.8.1).

122. See Plin. *Ep.* 5.11; 6.12; 6.30; 7.11; 7.16; 7.23; 7.32; also 4.19 to Calpurnia Hispulla.

123. Note in particular Plin. *Ep.* 10.2.1: *exprimere, domine, verbis non possum, quantum mihi gaudium attuleris*; and 10.10.1: *exprimere, domine, verbis non possum, quanto me gaudium adfecerint epistulae tuae*. Cf. 5.14.1: *exprimere non possum, quanto sim gaudio adfectus*.

124. See, e.g., Plin. *Ep.* 10.3A.1; 10.4.1; 10.5.1; 10.6.2; 10.8.6; 10.10.2; 10.11.2. Cf. Cotton 1984b: 266: "The *indulgentia-pietas* bond between the paternal *princeps* and his subjects excludes a relationship of reciprocity: it is the extinction of *amicitia*—in the old sense—between himself and his subjects."

125. See, e.g., Guillemin 1929: 130 and Sherwin-White 1966: 3–5 and 11–16; Weische 1989. Méthy 2006 provides a convenient summary of views and bibliography.



126. Cf. Hoffer 1999: 10–11, who describes Pliny's correspondents as a "virtuous circle of friendship."

127. Much the same considerations apply to the extant correspondence of Fronto. (The following references follow the text, abbreviations and numbering given in van den Hout 1988.) For his use of *amo*, see e.g., Fronto *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 1.3.1 and 11; 2.2.7; 4.1.4; 4.2.2–4; for *diligo*, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 4.2.5; 4.12.7. For recommendations and requests, e.g., *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 5.49; *ad amicos* 1.1; 1.4; *Ep. ad Verum Imp.* 1.6. For congratulations, *Ep. ad Ant. Pium* 1.1; *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 5.47. There are still features of interest, however, as far as linguistic politeness is concerned. See e.g., the affiliative facework at *Ep. ad Antoni. Imp.* 1.5.2–3; *Ep. ad Verum Imp.* 1.4; *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 3.14.3–4. The ways in which Fronto negotiates his relationships with these powerful men would repay further study.

## CHAPTER 1

1. On the process of linguistic conventionalization, see Ferguson 1994: 21, who regards the "formation of conventionalised 'message-forms'" as a fundamental characteristic of human language behavior. See also Coulmas 1979.

2. Cf. Kasper 1990: 208: "Polite behavior normally goes unnoticed, rudeness is conspicuous." See also Goffman 1971: 102–3; Ferguson 1976: 140–41; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1992: 242–43.

3. The various aristocrats who employ each strategy are listed in the appendix.

4. See Roesch 2004. Note that this study is limited in scope, analyzing only Cicero's *Ad Familiares* written between 62 and 50 B.C. and the recommendations in *Ad Familiares* Book 13.

5. See the important prosopographical study by Deniaux 1993. For other discussions of Roman letters of recommendation, see Plantera 1977–78; Cotton 1981; Cugusi 1983: 99–101; Cotton 1984a; Trisoglio 1984.

6. The business of writing recommendations was also important in the Roman army; see, e.g., Bowman 1998: 92–94; Bowman and Thomas 1994: 221 (frag. 250).

7. On M. Acilius Caninus, a *novus homo*, see Wiseman 1971a: 209; Deniaux 1993: 387–88. He was (probably) proconsul in Sicily from 46–45 and in Greece from 45–44; see Broughton 1952: 525 and 1986: 1–2. On Cn. Otacilius Naso, an equestrian, see Nicolet 1974: 967 (no. 254); Deniaux 1993: 535–36.

8. For *utor familiarissime*, see *Fam.* 13.2.1 (SB 314); *Fam.* 13.14.1 (SB 281); *Fam.* 13.29.2 (SB 282); *Fam.* 13.43.1 (SB 268); for *habet negotia*, see *Fam.* 1.3.1 (SB 56); *Fam.* 13.30.1 (SB 301); for *commendo*, see *Fam.* 13.12.1 (SB 279); *Fam.* 13.15.1 (SB 317); *Fam.* 13.16.4 (SB 316); *Fam.* 13.40.1 (SB 59); for *gratissimum mihi feceris* etc. see *Fam.* 13.40 (SB 59); *Fam.* 13.51.1 (SB 61); *Fam.* 13.67.2 (SB 296); also appendix no. 1.

9. Cf. Coulmas 1979: 251: "the chief function of [routine formulas] is to reduce the complexity of social interaction."

10. See, e.g., at *Fam.* 13.33 (SB 304) the phrase *si intellexero...pondus habuisse*. Often, however, Cicero is eager for the recommendee to be shown that the recommendation has carried some influence. Cf. *Fam.* 13.25 (SB 291): *ut is intellegat hanc*

*meam commendationem magnum apud te pondus habuisse*; also *Fam.* 13.26.1 (SB 292); *Fam.* 13.34 (SB 305); *Fam.* 13.35 (SB 306); *Fam.* 13.44 (SB 270); *Fam.* 13.45 (SB 271); *Fam.* 13.74 (SB 269); *Fam.* 13.75.2 (SB 60).

11. Matsumoto 1988: 413. See also Chen 1990–91 with bibliography.

12. Cf. Roesch 2004: 147–48. On the social cachet of this kind of in-group language, see n. 110 in the previous chapter.

13. On Precilius, see Deniaux 1993: 545–47.

14. For the use of *amor*, *singularis*, *mirifice* and *diligo* in formal letters, see appendix, nos. 4a, 4c, 8a and 8c.

15. On the excision of *ille*, see Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 457; cf. Shackleton Bailey 2001 vol. III: 70, n. 2.

16. On the use of *em!* in Roman comedy, see Hofmann 1951: 35–36.

17. See Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 458. For the younger Quintus' hostile remarks, see, e.g., *Att.* 13.37.2 (SB 346) and n. 42 in this chapter.

18. See Adams 2003: 318–21; cf. Steele 1900: 394–95; Baldwin 1992: 12; Dubuisson 1992: 192–93.

19. Because the formulaic elements of recommendations have been treated in some detail by previous scholars, they are not included in the appendix. For references, see n. 5 in this chapter.

20. See Deniaux 1993: 402–4 on Culleolus' identity and official post. Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 353 suggests a date of 61 or 60 B.C. for the letter, with Culleolus the governor of Cisalpine Gaul (a province that included Illyricum); other editors prefer a date of 59–58 B.C. See Marinone 2004: 279.

21. On L. Lucceius, see McDermott 1969; Deniaux 1993: 516–19.

22. Cf. Roesch 2004: 147 and 149 for these expressions as a strategy of politeness; also Cugusi 1983: 100.

23. See, e.g., *Fam.* 9.15.1 (SB 196). Further examples are given in appendix, no. 1. For the use of the intensifying prefix in *pergrata*, see, e.g., *Fam.* 13.61 (SB 135); *Q. Fr.* 3.1.12 (SB 21); *Att.* 5.10.4 (SB 103). Cf. *pergratas* in Plin. *Ep.* 9.40.1. The compound use of *per-* seems to have been a regular feature of upper-class conversational idiom in Cicero's time. See the comments by Leeman and Pinkster 1981: 27–28 on the language of the interlocutors in *De Oratore*; cf. von Albrecht 1973: col. 1273, lines 23–28.

24. See, e.g., *Att.* 3.20.2 (SB 65); *Att.* 4.9.2 (SB 85); *Att.* 6.1.13 (SB 115); *Att.* 6.8.5 (SB 122); *Att.* 12.30.1 (SB 270).

25. On Lentulus Spinther, see Deniaux 1993: 399–401; cf. Gruen 1974: 144–45.

26. See, e.g., Hellegouarc'h 1972: 152–70; Saller 1982: 15–21. Cf. *Off.* 1.47; *Amic.* 20 and 49. On the etiquette of thank you notes, see Miller 1914: 57–58.

27. See Cicero's comment to Terentia at *Fam.* 14.1.5 (SB 8): *quibus me voluisti agere gratias egi et me a te certiore factum esse scripsi*. ("I have thanked the persons you wished me to thank, and written that my information came from you.")

28. On Trebianus, see Deniaux 1993: 107.

29. For similar sequences, see also *Att.* 2.25.1 (SB 45); *Fam.* 13.42.1 (SB 53); *Fam.* 13.64.1 (SB 138).

30. For these details, see *Fam.* 12.28.2 (SB 374). On Q. Cornificius and his post, see Deniaux 1993: 401–2; Broughton 1952: 557 and 1986: 76.

31. Note, too, the elegant *praeteritio* in Cornificius' remark. He shows an awareness of his debt to Cicero while forgoing an explicit acknowledgment of it.

32. On Cicero's relationship with Dionysius, see Treggiari 1969: 119–21, who attempts a balanced view of the conflicting obligations that at times must have confronted the freedman. Shackleton Bailey 1971: 162 is less sympathetic. For Cicero's other criticisms of Dionysius' behavior, see *Att.* 8.4.2 (SB 156) and *Att.* 9.12.2 (SB 179). See further discussion in chapter 3.

33. Note, too, Caesar's use of the phrase *ita de me mereris* at *Att.* 9.6A (SB 172A).

34. See, e.g., Cicero's remarks to Q. Philippus at *Fam.* 13.73.1 (SB 273).

35. See, e.g., *Att.* 4.9.1 (SB 85).

36. See the appendix, no. 2; cf. Deniaux 1993: 51–52. For pledges as speech-acts, see Austin 1962: 159; Searle 1969: 67.

37. For their use in recommendations, see, e.g., *Fam.* 7.5.3 (SB 26); *Fam.* 13.17.3 (SB 283); *Fam.* 13.22.2 (SB 288). Cf. Deniaux 1993: 52–53.

38. See further discussion in chapters 2 and 5.

39. On M. Juventius Laterensis (pr. 51), see Broughton 1952: 353; on his suicide, see *Fam.* 10.15.2 (SB 390); *Fam.* 10.21.1 and 3 (SB 391); *Fam.* 10.23.4 (SB 414); Vell. Pat. 2.63.2; Dio Cass. 46.51. On his character, see *Att.* 2.18.2 (SB 38); *Planc.* 53.

40. See also the phrase *genus litterarum* at *Fam.* 6.10B.3 (SB 222).

41. See, e.g., *Fam.* 4.13.6 (SB 225) to Nigidius Figulus, *Fam.* 6.22.3 (SB 221) to Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, and *Fam.* 6.13.3 (SB 227) to Q. Ligarius; cf. Deniaux 1993: 333–43.

42. See, e.g., *Att.* 11.23.2 (SB 232); *Att.* 13.29.3 (SB 300); *Att.* 13.37.2 (SB 346); *Att.* 14.17.3 (SB 371); *Att.* 14.19.3 (SB 372).

43. See *Q. Fr.* 1.2.16 (SB 2): *omnes et se et suos amicos, clientis, libertos, servos, pecunias denique suas pollicentur.... Pompeius omnia pollicetur et Caesar.* Cf. also C. Matius at *Att.* 9.11.2 (SB 178).

44. See, e.g., *Att.* 1.20.1 (SB 20); *Att.* 5.19.2 (SB 112); *Att.* 7.2.4 (SB 125); *Att.* 10.1.1 (SB 190); *Att.* 14.19.6 (SB 372); *Att.* 16.11.1 (SB 420).

45. Cf. Roesch 2004: 149.

46. See the references in the appendix, no. 3; cf. Plin. *Ep.* 4.23.1; 6.31.1; 9.16.1.

47. See the appendix, no. 4; cf. Roesch 2004: 150. See also Abbott 1896; Cugusi 1983: 81 (on *mehercule*); 83 (on *valde*); 100 (on *vehementer rogo*); Orlandini 2003. On the use of this kind of politeness strategy in modern contexts, see Brown and Levinson 1987: 104–7.

48. See Cugusi 1992b: 34; Deniaux 1993: 50–51; Risselada 1993: 247–58. The latter work examines the sociolinguistic principles that govern the choice of “directive expression” across various genres of Latin literature, not just in Cicero's letters. In general its approach is largely formalistic (see p. 329) and concentrates primarily on the various grammatical constructions (or “expression forms”) used to issue directives. It devotes little attention to the supplementary politeness strategies that contribute to the social transaction as a whole.

49. Cf. Deniaux 1993: 50–51. *quaeso ut* is used occasionally; see *Fam.* 3.2.1 (SB 65), *Fam.* 13.17.2 (SB 283), *Att.* 7.12.1 (SB 135). More often, however, *quaeso* is used parenthetically to soften an imperative form; e.g., *Att.* 10.4.12 (SB 195), *Att.* 11.22.2 (SB 237), *Att.* 12.31.2 (SB 272), *Q. Fr.* 1.1.42 (SB 1). See also the conventionalized use of *rogo* in

requests in numerous letters from Vindolanda, e.g., Bowman and Thomas 1994: 109–116 (frags. 167–76), often combined with the deferential address *domine*; also 330 (frag. 344), where the stronger term *imploro* is used.

50. Cf. Deniaux 1993: 50–51.

51. See, e.g., the essays in Blum-Kulka et al. 1989 and Trosborg 1995.

52. See, e.g., *Att.* 5.13.3 (SB 106) and *Att.* 5.17.5 (SB 110). It is a request that he makes to several other correspondents during this year as well; see, e.g., *Fam.* 2.7.4 (SB 107) to C. Curio, *Fam.* 15.12.2 (SB 102) to L. Paullus, *Fam.* 15.9.2 (SB 101) to M. Marcellus.

53. See references in the appendix, no. 1.

54. See also Cicero's description of another especially insistent request at *Att.* 12.32.1 (SB 271). Cf. *Att.* 15.4.3 (SB 381), *Fam.* 5.12.9 (SB 22) and frag. VII.I at Shackleton Bailey 2002: 328–29, in which the phrase *multis verbis* points to requests urged with an insistence that is unwelcome.

55. For Cicero's reply to Caesar, see *Att.* 9.11A (SB 178A) and Hall 1996 on its strategies of social evasion.

56. On the career of M. Claudius Marcellus, see Broughton 1952: 240; for his clashes with Caesar before the civil war, see Suet. *Iul.* 28. For Cicero's account of events in the senate leading to Marcellus' restoration, see *Fam.* 4.4.3 (SB 203). On his letters to Cicero, see Büchner 1978, who notes that Cicero's relationship with the man was based on political convenience rather than close friendship. Cf. Tyrrell and Purser 1894: lxxiv–lxxv.

57. For Cicero's letter, see the phrase *tua gratulatio* at *Fam.* 4.11.1 (SB 232). For his support of other exiles, see n. 41 in this chapter.

58. The phrase *amantissimus mei* also recalls Atticus' use of *amantissimus tui* (*Att.* 7.7.1; SB 130) to describe Dionysius' supposed affection for Cicero.

59. See the appendix, nos. 1 and 2.

60. See Hellegouarc'h 1972: 149–50. Cicero at *Off.* 2.29–32 asserts the importance of *benevolentia* in the maintenance of relationships in general; cf. also *Amic.* 19–22.

61. See the appendix, no. 6 for references. Other terms such as *studium* and *voluntas* were also regularly employed to convey the writer's friendly disposition toward the addressee; cf. Hellegouarc'h 1972: 174–77; 183–85.

62. Cf. *Fam.* 5.13.2 (SB 201); *Att.* 8.2.1 (SB 152). See also the comments by Marchetti 2000: 9–17.

63. For less conventional ways of demonstrating *benevolentia*, see *Fam.* 5.13.1 (SB 201); *Fam.* 5.8.3 (SB 25); *Brut.* 254–55.

64. See the appendix, no. 5. Cf. Miller 1914: 55; Roesch 2004: 149; Plin. *Ep.* 4.8.1; 6.26.1.

65. On the prosecution of Bursa, see Alexander 1990: 159–60 (no. 327); David 1992: 147–48.

66. See, e.g., *Fam.* 7.2.2: *sed de ioco satis est*.

67. On the character and social position of M. Marius, see Münzer 1930 and Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 323–24. Note that Marius' comment may in fact have been intended to please Cicero, with its disparagement of Bursa's status.

68. Pompey no doubt viewed Cicero's success with some annoyance. Indeed Metellus Nepos and Caesar had put forward a proposal for his immediate recall to deal with Catiline (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 26; Dio Cass. 37.43.1); cf. Seager 2002: 71–73. Cicero

seems to have sent an earlier letter to Pompey regarding the conspiracy, one that was evidently quite long and self-congratulatory; see Stangl 1964: 167, lines 23–30. Cf. *Planc.* 85; *Sull.* 67.

69. For the obligation to offer congratulations, see also the phrase *ut debeo* at *Fam.* 2.9.1 (SB 85): *primum tibi, ut debeo, gratulor*; cf. *Fam.* 3.12.1 (SB 75); Roesch 2004: 149.

70. A more detailed study of Pompey's epistolary style is presented in chapter 3.

71. On compliments as a mark of refinement in Cicero's dialogues, see Becker 1938: 21; Leeman and Pinkster 1981: 82. On the sociolinguistic implications of compliments, see Pomerantz 1978; Barnlund and Araki 1985; Brown and Levinson 1987: 102; Holmes 1998.

72. On Decimus Brutus and his correspondence, see Gebhard 1891; Tyrrell and Purser 1899: lxxv–lxxx. On his career and family, see Münzer 1931; Duval 1991. Further discussion in chapter 3.

73. Cf. Hutchinson 1998: 17.

74. In the first case, Lentulus had probably used some variation of the formulas found in Cicero's correspondence, e.g., *tua erga me benevolentia mihi perspectissima est / non est obscura / nota est or tuam erga me benevolentiam facile perspicio*. Cf. *Fam.* 4.9.1 (SB 231); *Fam.* 10.12.5 (SB 377); *Fam.* 13.70 (SB 298); *Fam.* 13.71 (SB 299); *Fam.* 15.2.8 (SB 105). In the second case, he perhaps used a phrase such as *quod me certiore facis de omnibus rebus mihi gratissimum est*. Cf. *Fam.* 3.8.9 (SB 70); *Fam.* 14.8 (SB 164); *Att.* 10.3 (SB 193).

75. Cf. Roesch 2004: 149.

76. See appendix, no. 7; Deniaux 1993: 113–17.

77. On Cassius' post in 51 B.C., see Broughton 1952: 242; also Deniaux 1993: 395–96. Dettenhofer 1990 discusses Cicero's correspondence with Cassius in 45 B.C., but has little to say about this earlier letter.

78. See *Fam.* 15.14.1 (SB 106). The two men had been in contact earlier, with Cicero having sent Cassius a letter of congratulations; see the phrase *et feci antea* at *Fam.* 15.14.3. On M. Fabius Gallus, see Deniaux 1993: 496–98.

79. On the phrase *in aere esse*, see Otto 1962: 7; Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 442. For Fabius and his business interests, see Deniaux 1993: 497.

80. Three of Cicero's own recommendations for Fabius from around this period are preserved in the extant correspondence; see *Fam.* 2.14 (SB 89); *Fam.* 9.25 (SB 114); *Fam.* 13.59 (SB 141).

81. See the appendix, nos. 8c and 8d. Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 4.4.

82. On Pompeius Bithynicus, governor of Sicily at the time, see Broughton 1952: 329 and 1986: 161; Deniaux 1993: 104. He evidently sent another letter to Cicero around this time in which he expressed a hope to spend considerable time in Cicero's company, and perhaps also mentioned his father; see *Fam.* 6.17.2 (SB 324).

83. See Deniaux 1993: 252–53 on the letter and its business; also Watkins 1997: 27–30. There was the possibility that some of Antistius' estate would be confiscated by Caesar, on the grounds of the man's support of Pompey in the civil war. Antistius was quaestor in Macedonia in 50 B.C. (*Fam.* 13.29.3; SB 282). On Capito, see Deniaux 1993: 393; 455–57.

84. See Roth 1871: 289: *Munatius Plancus, Ciceronis discipulus, orator habetur insignis*. ("Munatius Plancus, Cicero's student, is regarded as an exceptional orator.") Cf. Kaster 1995: 317–18.

85. Cicero acknowledges the unusual length of his remarks (*Fam.* 13.29.2: *haec tam longe repetita principia*). On Plancus' relationship with Cicero before 46 B.C., cf. Watkins 1997: 21.

86. See chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of Cicero's relationship and correspondence with Appius Claudius.

87. For this letter, see *Fam.* 3.6.2 (SB 69); Constans 1921: 125; Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 364.

88. Note Cicero's characterization of these paragraphs as a *pars orationis* (*Fam.* 3.5.1), a phrase that suggests a readily identifiable polite routine within the letter. For *oratio* as simply "what one says, one's words," see OLD, s.v. *oratio* 5a (which quotes this example).

89. See *Fam.* 3.5.1 (SB 68): *tibi tamen agam, ut debeo, gratias*. The phrase *ut debeo* here points again to the social expectation (in certain contexts) that thanks be formally presented.

90. For other examples, see *memoria nostri* at *Fam.* 12.17.1 (SB 204), with reference to Q. Cornificius; and *commemoratio tua paternae necessitudinis benevolentiaeque* at *Fam.* 10.5.1 (SB 359) with reference to Munatius Plancus. Cicero's account at *Sull.* 18 of a face-to-face request from P. Autronius suggests that similar conventions also prevailed in spoken petitions.

91. On the place of polite "routines" in social encounters, see Ferguson 1976: 140–41 and Laver 1981.

92. See, e.g., *Fam.* 15.16–19 (SB 213–216); also Griffin 1995.

93. See, e.g., *Att.* 9.11.2 (SB 178), in which Cicero describes Matius as *temperatus et prudens*; also *Fam.* 7.15.2 (SB 39).

94. See *Fam.* 11.27.7 (SB 348): *de isto ipso suffragio... de curatione ludorum*; discussion by Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 486–88. For the date of the letter (probably October 44 B.C.), see Kytzler 1960b; Marinone 2004: 248. On Octavian's games, see n. 18 in chapter 5. An earlier version of some of the ideas presented in the following pages can be found in Hall 2005b.

95. For these details, see *Fam.* 11.27.1 (SB 348).

96. See, e.g., Sternkopf 1901; Dahlmann 1938; Heuss 1956; Combès 1958; Kytzler 1960a; Heuss 1962; most recently, see Griffin 1997; Konstan 1997: 131–32.

97. For Cicero's use of *repetere* here, cf. *ex alto repetita sint* at *Fam.* 3.5.1 (SB 68) and *repetere* at *Fam.* 6.16 (SB 323).

98. Cf. Heuss 1956: 58: "Nach solchen Vorbereitungen glaubt sich Cicero genügend gegen Mißverständnisse gewappnet." ("After such preparatory comments, Cicero believes himself sufficiently armed against misunderstanding.") Cf. Kytzler 1960b: 55, n. 2, who notes in passing that Cicero needs to induce in Matius a favourable disposition ("günstige Stimmung").

99. Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 475. See also Kytzler 1960b: 57–61, who uses these correspondences to try to construct an argument regarding the arrangement of letters in Book 11 of *Ad Familiares*. In general, however, his argument does not take into account the wider similarities with other letters highlighted in our discussion. On Oppius, see Tyrrell and Purser 1894: lxi–lxx; Münzer 1939; Nicolet 1974: 964 (no. 251).

100. Cicero acknowledges the letter's brevity in his promise of a fuller letter in the near future; see *Fam.* 11.29.3.

101. Cicero in fact aborted his journey abroad and returned to Rome at the start of September; see *Att.* 16.7.1–2 (SB 415), *Phil.* 1.7–8; Ramsey 2001.

102. On Trebonius, see Münzer 1937; Deniaux 1993: 107. On his book, Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 367 remarks that it was evidently “a collection of Cicero’s *dicta*, each in its anecdotal setting.” On the dating of the letter, see Marinone 2004: 204.

103. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 46 for a summary of the social complexities involved in gift-giving. For the sense of debt created by Trebonius’ gift, see *Fam.* 15.21.3 (SB 207): *cui quidem ego amori utinam ceteris rebus possem, amore certe respondebo*. (“I wish I could repay your affection in all other ways, but at least I shall repay it with my own.”) In addition to the social debt incurred by Cicero, note that Trebonius as the giver exposes himself to potential humiliation if his book is not well received. Cicero’s letters vividly reveal his own anxiety at sending a copy of the second version of the *Academica* to M. Terentius Varro, who was now included in the dialogue as an interlocutor. See *Att.* 13.14–15.1 (SB 322); *Att.* 13.22.3 (SB 329); *Att.* 13.24.1 (SB 332); *Att.* 13.25.3 (SB 333).

104. See *Fam.* 12.16.4 (SB 328) for what seems to be an unfulfilled promise on Cicero’s behalf.

105. On polite language as a metaphorical gift, see Brown and Levinson 1987: 129.

106. For discussions of this letter, see Lossmann 1962: 98–102; Konstan 1997: 124–25.

107. The formal register of these remarks becomes all the more evident when we consider Cicero’s style in the following sections. Note, for example, the exuberant exclamation in section 9 and the conversational rapidity in section 11. Cf. Lossman 1962: 98–99. The letter as a whole seems to have been successful in patching up the relationship between the two men, although Atticus’ relationship with Quintus evidently remained strained for some time; see *Att.* 1.19.11 (SB 19) and *Att.* 1.20.1 (SB 20).

108. Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 486.

109. See especially Matius’ remarks at *Fam.* 11.28 (SB 349), section 1: *magnam... laborabam* and *ut par erat... amicitia nostra*; and section 8: *Trebatio nostro... fecit*.

110. On Curio and his role in affairs leading to the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, see Gruen 1974: 470–83; Dettenhofer 1992: 45–63.

111. See e.g., *Fam.* 15.21.1 (SB 207): *declarationem amoris tui*; *Att.* 1.17.5–6 (SB 17): *amoris vero erga me*; *amantissimo consilio*; *Fam.* 11.27.2 (SB 348): *amor non habet*; *Fam.* 13.29.1 (SB 282): *noster in te amor*; full references in appendix, no. 8a. Cf. also Roesch 2004: 147; *Plin. Ep.* 1.16; 4.12; 4.15.

112. See the distinction at appendix, nos. 8a (i) and (ii).

113. See *Amic.* 26 and 100 on the derivation; also 51 for the assertion *amici amor ipse delectat*. Cf. *Fin.* 2.78; Brunt 1965: 3, n. 5 and 1988: 354, n. 18.

114. On *amor*, see *TLL* vol. I, col. 1968, lines 19–64. Cf. Hellegouarc’h 1972: 146–47, who notes that the noun is used primarily to convey “un sentiment exclusif et personnel.”

115. As Hellegouarc’h 1972: 143 notes, *amo* is on occasions more or less synonymous with the verb *diligo*, whose meaning in the first instance is to value one thing ahead of another (from the sense of selecting or choosing contained in its root verb *lego*). More often, though, *amo* suggests a particularly powerful emotional attraction; see the distinction drawn at *ad Brut.* 1.1.1 (SB 13); Hellegouarc’h 1972: 145.

116. See the appendix, no. 8b; cf. Marouzeau 1933; Cugusi 1983: 82. By the first century A.D. *carissimus* seems to have become a formulaic expression of esteem in the letters of the military classes. See, e.g., Cugusi 1992a: 118 (frag. 77) from Rustius Barbarus to his friend (styled *karisimo fratri*); and Cugusi 1992a: 150 (frag. 141), a letter from the soldier Claudius Terentianus to his father (*patri karissimo*); on Terentianus, see Adams 1977: 3 and 84–87. Cf. also numerous examples in the material from Vindolanda; Bowman and Thomas 1994: 214 (frag. 242), 256 (frags. 291–93), 270–71 (frag. 298), 283–84 (frag. 306), 315 (frag. 332), 320 (frag. 341). In general, however, these letters show little of the deftness employed by Cicero and his contemporaries in the exploitation of epistolary politeness. On the use of *carus* and *carissimus* in direct address, see Dickey 2002: 136–41. It would be worth investigating more closely how far the apparent weakening of the superlative observed by Dickey is influenced by its use in the polite fictions of aristocratic correspondence.

117. As Brown and Levinson 1987: 101 note: “the linguistic realizations of positive politeness are in many respects simply representative of the normal linguistic behaviour among intimates.”

118. Sakamoto and Naotsuka 1982: 5–7.

119. Sakamoto and Naotsuka 1982: 12–15.

120. Brunt 1965: 8 and 1988: 361.

121. See the appendix, no. 9 for details; cf. Adams 1978: 162–63; Deniaux 1993: 83–84; Shackleton Bailey 1995: 9–10; Dickey 2002: 217–24.

122. Cf. Shackleton Bailey 1995: 9 who describes its use as “lubricating.”

123. See the appendix, no. 9. Adams 1978: 161 suggests that direct address with *mi* was probably used in oral as well as written contexts; see e.g., *Fam.* 9.14.3 (SB 326). Dickey 2002: 217, however, points to its relatively infrequent use in the conversational language of Plautus, Terence and Petronius, and concludes that it was restricted to letter-writing. A third possibility perhaps is that this form was a specifically aristocratic one (used in both face-to-face and epistolary contexts), and thus restricted to a social world not generally depicted by Plautus, Terence and Petronius.

124. Cf. Rudd 1966: 77–78. On *dulcissime* as a term of address, see Dickey 2002: 132 and 322–3. *rerum* adds an extra touch of inappropriate grandiosity; cf. Ovid *Her.* 4.125; *Met.* 8.49; Brown 1993: 176.

125. Cf. Shackleton Bailey 1995: 10, who suggests that Cicero’s avoidance of this form of address points to a certain tension in his relationship with Brutus at this time; for their relations in general, see Tyrrell and Purser 1899: xcvi–cx; Deniaux 1993: 413–15.

126. See Broughton 1952: 224 and 230.

127. See e.g., *Fam.* 2.1.1 (SB 45); *Fam.* 9.3.1 (SB 176); *Fam.* 12.18.1 (SB 205); *Fam.* 13.7.1 (SB 320); *Fam.* 15.17.4 (SB 214); also Nicholson 1994: 35–38; Nikitinski 2001.

128. Cugusi 1983: 75–76.

129. Cf. Laver 1981: 296.

130. Cicero’s comments at *Brut.* 280 suggest that he may have hoped to serve as political mentor to Curio. Note too the explicit reference to their age difference at *Fam.* 2.1.2 (SB 45); cf. *Att.* 2.8.1 (SB 28). Their shared literary interests presumably helped to foster the familiar, witty tone in their correspondence. Gruen 1974: 471 describes Curio as “brilliant and talented, but reckless, ambitious, and perverse.” Cf. the rhetorically sharpened portrait at Vell. Pat. 2.48.3.



131. On the dating of the letter, see Marinone 2004: 134.

132. See *Fam.* 1.9.20 (SB 20) for some of the strains in the relationship. For Cicero's general dislike of Crassus, see also *Att.* 4.13.2 (SB 87), Dio Cass. 39.10, and his criticisms at *Off.* 1.109 and 3.75. Useful summaries in Marshall 1976: 173–74 and Ward 1977: 278–80.

133. For the face-to-face reconciliation, see *Fam.* 1.9.20 (SB 20); cf. Plut. *Cic.* 26.

134. On *observantia*, see Hellegouarc'h 1972: 159; Deniaux 1993: 85–87 and 139–40; also n. 3 in chapter 2.

135. See Roesch 2004: 146 and appendix, no. 10. Cf. the use of the phrase *velim existimes*.

136. See *Att.* 10.8A.1 (SB 199A) and *Fam.* 15.5.3 (SB 111).

137. See Risselada 1993: 291–93 on the use of *velim* in Roman correspondence, especially the process of conventionalization that seems to have taken place in the period between Plautus and Cicero; also Roesch 2004: 145 on the “subjonctif d'attenuation.” Cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 135 and 157–58 on the use of the polite subjunctive as a strategy of negative politeness to indicate one's reluctance to impose on the addressee.

138. Note, too, the relatively high degree of grammatical subordination that the expression involves. (It is usually followed by an *ut*-clause, or, as here, indirect statement after *existimes*.) This complexity distinguishes it from the more paratactic style of conversational Latin, and so produces a certain formality. See Palmer 1961: 131–40; von Albrecht 2003: 61–62.

139. On the use of *foedus* in this letter, see Brunt 1965: 6 and 1988: 358–59, who rightly modifies the generalization of Taylor 1949: 7. The closest parallel is Cicero's solemn remark to Brutus at *ad Brut.* 1.1.1 (SB 13): *volo enim testimonium hoc tibi videri potius quam epistulam*. (“For I want you to regard this as an affidavit rather than a letter.”) But even this is relatively restrained compared to these pledges made to Crassus.

140. See, e.g., Lacey 1978: 83: “one of the most unpleasantly insincere in his correspondence”; Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 327: “conscious insincerity accounts for the verbose and repetitive character of his letter.”

141. The unfamiliarity of the social ritual that the letter undertakes can be seen in the inclination of nineteenth century commentators to view the text as an amalgamation of two separate drafts of the letter, or of two short letters sent by separate messengers as a guarantee against loss during delivery. See Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 327–28.

142. This shared idiom has largely gone unnoticed by scholars of Cicero's epistolary language. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, much academic effort was expended in identifying minute *divergences* in the language of Cicero's correspondents. See, e.g., the monographs by Schmalz 1881a; 1881b; 1890; Becker 1888; Gebhard 1891; Bergmüller 1897. Contrast Cugusi 1983: 98–103 and 1989: 406–12 for brief discussions of “frasi ricorrenti e stereotipate.”

## CHAPTER 2

1. Holmes 1998: 193.

2. See Holmes 1998: 190–92, with particular reference to compliments exchanged between men and women.

3. See e.g., *Fam.* 4.4.5 (SB 203); *Fam.* 10.4.1 (SB 358); *Fam.* 12.27.1 (SB 432); *Fam.* 13.6.1 (SB 57); *Fam.* 13.23.2 (SB 289); *Fam.* 15.14.1 (SB 106). A more ambiguous view was also possible, however; see *Att.* 13.49.2 (SB 347): *etsi mehercule, ut tu intellegis, magis mihi isti serviunt, si observare servire est.* (“Upon my word, though, as you are aware, these people are more my slaves than I theirs, if to pay court is to be a slave.”). See also Hellegouarc’h 1972: 159; Deniaux 1993: 85–87; 139–40.

4. See *Q. Fr.* 2.14.1 (SB 18) and *Att.* 4.16.7 (SB 89), respectively. Cicero’s comments to Quintus at this time may be influenced by his awareness that they would be passed on to Caesar, with whom Quintus was on campaign. On Cicero’s correspondence with Caesar during this period, see Pauli 1958; Lossmann 1962; White 2003.

5. At *Att.* 11.16.1 (SB 227), Cicero remarks that a letter in current circulation ascribed to Caesar is thought by some not to have been written by him, precisely because it is written *exigue* (that is, not in Caesar’s customary energetic and generous style).

6. For a discussion of Cicero’s relationship with Appius Claudius and its various phases, see chapter 4.

7. On the Greek term, see *LSJ*, s.v. ἐκτένεια, where other meanings of the word include “assiduousness” and “abundance,” related to ἐκτείνω, to “prolong” or “extend.” Here the term seems to be at least ambivalent in connotation, if not actually negative. Contrast the more positive evaluation implicit in Cicero’s use of its cognate ἐκτενέστερον at *Att.* 13.9.1 (SB 317); see also φιλοστοργότερον (likewise at *Att.* 13.9.1) and its cognate φιλοστόργως (*Att.* 15.27.1; SB 406). The term ἀγοητευτός (“without guile”) at *Att.* 12.3.1 (SB 239), derived from the verb γοητεύω meaning “bewitch” or “beguile,” implies a commendable simplicity of expression. Adams 2003: 323–29 classifies these words as essentially “rhetorical and critical terms,” whose use represents a form of “cultured code-switching.” Cf. Dunkel 2000: 127–29. Note that Cicero coolly regards Hortensius’ effusive expressions of goodwill as something he can exploit in the near future (*Att.* 10.17.1; SB 209): *qua quidem cogito uti.* For Cicero’s dubious opinion of the man, see, e.g., *Att.* 6.3.9 (SB 117).

8. In addition to *Att.* 7.3.11 (SB 126) and *Q. Fr.* 2.11.2 (SB 15) see *Att.* 12.5C (SB 241); *Q. Cic. Comm. Pet.* 42; Hellegouarc’h 1972: 213–15.

9. See *Att.* 2.2.1 (SB 22); *Att.* 2.4.1 (SB 24); *Att.* 2.7.3 (SB 27); *Att.* 5.12.3 (SB 105); *Att.* 5.17.4 (SB 110); *Att.* 7.1.4 (SB 124); *Att.* 7.8.2 (SB 131); *Att.* 9.18.4 (SB 187); *Att.* 15.29.3 (SB 408); *Att.* 16.2.2 (SB 412); *Q. Fr.* 1.4.1 (SB 4); *Q. Fr.* 2.9.4 (SB 12).

10. To Curio: *Fam.* 2.7.2 (SB 107); to Cassius: *Fam.* 15.17.4 (SB 214); Caelius to Cicero: *Fam.* 8.6.5 (SB 88); *Fam.* 8.9.3 (SB 82).

11. Cicero also uses the phrase in *Att.* 16.16C.1 (SB 407C) to Capito. Although this letter includes a formal request, Cicero establishes a rather unusual social dynamic with his opening remark: *numquam putavi fore ut supplex ad te venirem.* (“I never thought to approach you in the role of humble petitioner.”) Evidently Cicero here feels able to employ a less restrained use of language. The phrase *amabo te* was not just used in epistolary contexts; see the anecdote related at *De or.* 2.278; also *Att.* 13.52.2 (SB 353).

12. See Blase 1896; MacCary and Willcock 1976: 200 provide a convenient summary of the evidence.

13. Other uses of *ne vivam* appear in more colloquial contexts; see *Att.* 4.17.5 (SB 91) and *Fam.* 7.23.4 (SB 209) to M. Fabius Gallus, a letter noteworthy for its energetic and informal style. Cf. Hofmann 1951: 31; Mart. 10.12.3.

14. See Pollio's notorious summary of Cicero's career and personality, preserved for us by the Elder Seneca at *Suas.* 6.24–25; also 6.14–15. In general, see Tyrrell and Purser 1899: lxxx–lxxxviii; André 1946; Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 7–10. For an astute political analysis of Pollio's extant letters to Cicero, see Bosworth 1972: 452–62, who characterizes them as fundamentally evasive. Cicero perhaps held the same opinion.

15. Cf. Broughton 1952: 343; App. *B Civ.* 3.81; 3.97; Groebe 1896: cols. 1590–91.

16. For the pleasures of walking with a friend, cf. Cicero's remark to Caelius at *Fam.* 2.12.2 (SB 95): *cum una mehercule ambulatiuncula atque uno sermone nostro*. This letter, however, unlike Pollio's, contains numerous other colloquial touches. Pollio's use of *invideo* may also be something of an urbane trope; cf. its apparent use by P. Volumnius Eutrapelus reported at *Fam.* 7.33.1 (SB 192).

17. For Pollio's reputation as a man of sophistication, see Catull. 12.6–9.

18. As we saw in the previous chapter, however, Cicero believed he could sense a significant change in Balbus' epistolary manner during their correspondence at the start of 47 B.C. (*Att.* 11.9.1; SB 220).

19. For other passages where Cicero acknowledges the possibly deceptive intent of those around him, see *Att.* 1.18.1 (SB 18) and *Att.* 10.9.1 and 3 (SB 200).

20. On pretense (*simulatio*) in Roman friendship, see *Amic.* 91–92. On the influence of *adsentatores*, see *Amic.* 94–97. Cf. Narducci 1989: 107–110 and 2004: 79–93.

21. For a fascinating attempt to acquire experimental proof of this feature of human behavior, see Brown 1968.

22. The claim by Brunt 1965: 9 and 1988: 362 that Crassus here undertakes an exercise in “tickling Cicero's vanity with a deceitful encomium” glosses over the complexity of the interaction. We may note, too, that part of Cicero's satisfaction may also derive from the fact that Pompey has finally been forced to regard him as a significant political player who has considerable support among his peers. For Cicero's displeasure at Pompey's muted congratulations regarding his handling of the Catilinarian conspiracy, see *Fam.* 5.7 (SB 3) and discussion in chapter 1. Much later at *Phil.* 2.12 Cicero prefers to stress the thanks that Pompey eventually did offer regarding his actions against Catiline.

23. See, e.g., *Q Fr.* 1.1.32–35 (SB 1).

24. The exact wording of the rest of the proverbial statement is not known, but Shackleton Bailey 1968a: 249 suggests something like *πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν*, with the sense “don't trust them a yard.”

25. On the text and translation of this sentence, see Shackleton Bailey 1968b: 411.

26. Cf. Cicero's complaints to Appius Claudius Pulcher at *Fam.* 3.8.5 (SB 70) discussed in chapter 4.

27. Huzar 1978: 55.

28. See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of this trope.

29. Huzar 1978: 55–56. For a rather different view, see Bengtson 1977: 52–54. Regarding *offensio nostra*, Shackleton Bailey 1968b: 411 prefers to “admit ignorance”; others refer to Cicero's election to the office of augur in 53 B.C., arguably at Antony's expense; see, e.g., Tyrrell and Purser 1894: 173.

30. On Antony's use of Greek, cf. Adams 2003: 333: “Not infrequently Cicero switches into Greek in alluding to characteristics of his own which might be construed as faults.”

31. See *Att.* 10.8A (SB 199A): (1) *nisi te valde amarem*; (2) *quia te nimio plus diligo*; (3) *tantique ab omnibus nobis fias*; (4) *quibus mehercule dignitas amplitudoque tua paene carior est quam tibi ipsi*; (5) *mihi neminem esse cariorem te excepto Caesare meo*; (6) *Caesarem maxime in suis M. Ciceronem reponere*; (7) *qui te, etsi non amabit, quod accidere non potest, tamen saluum amplissimumque esse cupiet*.

32. See *Att.* 10.8.10 (SB 199): *sed praemisit mihi odiosas litteras hoc exemplo*. (“But [Antony] has sent me the following disagreeable epistle in advance.”)

33. See, e.g., *Att.* 7.12.4 (SB 135); *Att.* 7.20.2 (SB 144); *Att.* 8.1.3 (SB 151); *Fam.* 2.16.2 (SB 154) to Caelius Rufus.

34. See *Att.* 9.1.3 (SB 167) where Cicero finally does consider dismissing the lictors in order to make his travel easier.

35. On Lambinus’ conjecture παραίνετικῶς, see Shackleton Bailey 1968b: 414. It suits well Antony’s offer of advice (*censeo*) and his self-assured generalization (*nam qui... manet*).

36. On Sextus Cloelius, see Shackleton Bailey 1960; Damon 1992.

37. Tyrrell and Purser 1897: 243 describe Antony’s Latin in this letter as “slovenly,” with particular reference to the phrase *absentia mea levior sit*. The function of the phrase as a politeness strategy, however, is clear enough.

38. See, e.g., *Att.* 14.13.6 (SB 367): *quae enim Caesar numquam neque fecit neque fecisset neque passus esset, ea nunc ex falsis eius commentariis proferuntur*. (“Things that Caesar neither did nor ever would have done or permitted to be done are now brought out from his forged memoranda.”) Cf. *Att.* 14.10.1 (SB 364); *Att.* 14.12.1 (SB 366); *Phil.* 1.17 and 24; 2.100; *Plut. Ant.* 15. In a later letter, Cicero insists that Caesar would not have countenanced Cloelius’ recall (*Att.* 14.14.2; SB 368); but he may be mistaken.

39. For these accusations following the execution of the conspirators, see, e.g., *Att.* 1.16.10 (SB 16) and *Sull.* 22.

40. Antony raised this point in his invective against Cicero in September 44 B.C.; see *Phil.* 2.17–18.

41. Shackleton Bailey 1967: 228. Note also his observation that the “fulness of the first paragraph in particular goes considerably further than courtesy requires or might excuse.”

42. See *Phil.* 2.7–9. Antony presumably pointed out the inconsistency between the letter’s professed affection for him and Cicero’s abrasive remarks in *Philippic* 1.

43. Cicero retaliates by deriding the fiction that underpinned Antony’s original request for his approval (*Phil.* 2.9–10); but his remarks necessarily have the character of a desperate rearguard action.

44. For the identification of Cassius Parmensis as the writer of the letter, see Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 418. For details of his command, Broughton 1952: 341; on his poetry, *Hor. Epist.* 1.4.3. After initially supporting the republican cause and Sextus Pompey, Cassius finally sided with Antony (*App. B Civ.* 5.139); cf. Scott 1933: 13–16. In general, see Skutsch 1899; Zucchelli 2003.

45. Cf. Beaujeu 1996: 105, who describes the style as “étonnement pompeux et amphigourique,” and the opening section as a whole as “un éloge dithyrambique.” Tyrrell and Purser 1899: 234 prefer understatement, calling it a “studied composition.” See also Zucchelli 2003: 135: “Ma molte espressioni della lettera risultano un po’ troppo ossequiose ed encomiastiche.”

46. The word is regularly applied only to formal religious occasions; see *TLL* vol. VII, col. 1974, lines 50–62, with this example quoted at lines 63–65 (s.v. *instauratio*).

47. See *Fam.* 12.4.1 (SB 363) for Cicero's acerbic assessment of the *consulares* still alive in 43 B.C.

48. On Cicero's contentious use of the phrase *cedant arma togae* in his poetry, see *Pis.* 72; *Phil.* 2.20; *Off.* 1.77; also Ewbank 1933: 13 and 123–4; Nicolet 1960. The claim that Cicero had saved the republic a second time (*nunc quoque*) was by now perhaps a compliment in wide circulation. See *Phil.* 6.2 and Octavian's attempted flattery reported at *Att.* 16.11.6 (SB 420), discussed in chapter 5.

49. Cf. Bömer 1953: 247–48.

50. Cicero himself employs a similarly abrupt switch in a letter to M. Cato following his own military successes in Cilicia in 53 B.C. (*Fam.* 15.4; SB 110). After a narration of his campaign in a plain, factual style (*Fam.* 15.4.2–10), he goes on to make an elaborate request using a fulsome and complimentary tone.

51. See *Fam.* 12.13.1 (SB 419): *ut... me... ad optimam spem patriae non minimam tibi ipsi producendum putes* ("so that you think me deserving of advancement to a fine prospect of service to my country and a prospect not negligible of service to you"); and *Fam.* 12.13.2 (SB 419): *quo minus tibi vacet me excipere et ad omnia quae velis et probes producere*. ("You will, I trust, find time to take my outstretched hand and advance me to such stations as you may wish and think proper.")

52. Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 418; cf. Zucchelli 2003: 135.

53. Cf. Cicero's comments to Plancus at *Fam.* 10.5.2 (SB 359): *rursus declaratio animi tui quem haberes de re publica quemque habiturus esses mihi erat iucundissima*. ("But, again, the declaration of your political attitude, now and in time to come, was most pleasing to me.")

54. On Lepidus' position and actions at this time, see von Rohden 1893: cols. 557–58; Broughton 1952: 341–42; Weigel 1992: 44–66.

55. See *Phil.* 5.38–40.

56. See *Phil.* 13.7–15 and *Fam.* 10.27 (SB 369). For further discussion, see chapter 5.

57. As we have seen, Antony politely offers to attribute rumors of Cicero's departure from Italy in 49 B.C. to the spite of ill-wishers (*Att.* 10.8A.1; SB 199A). Cicero, too, in his letter to Matus avails himself of this excuse (*Fam.* 11.27.7; SB 348).

58. See Welch 1995 for some examples of Lepidus' diplomatic successes.

### CHAPTER 3

1. On *Fabrateria Vetus* and Q. Hippius, see Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 357; Deniaux 1993: 202.

2. For the strategy of admitting or acknowledging an intrusion on the addressee's time, cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 188. The conventionality of this kind of phrase is suggested by the presence of the words *nisi molestus* on a tombstone in Campania (*CIL* 10.5371).

3. Cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 189 under the strategy "beg forgiveness."

4. For *ignosce*, cf. *Fam.* 6.7.1 (SB 237, Caecina to Cicero); for *velim ignoscas*, *Fam.* 5.12.1 (SB 22, Cicero to Lucceius); *Fam.* 13.75.1 (SB 60, Cicero to T. Titius); *Q Fr.* 3.1.7

(SB 21); *Att.* 7.12.3 (SB 135); *Att.* 12.18.1 (SB 254). Cicero also uses *ignosce* several times with Atticus in order to mitigate an infringement against the norms of decorum (rather than an infringement against Atticus' face); see *Att.* 4.17.3 (SB 91); *Att.* 7.2.7 (SB 125); *Att.* 11.2.3 (SB 212); *Att.* 11.7.6 (SB 218).

5. See *Att.* 16.16A (SB 407A) and *Att.* 16.16B (SB 407B).

6. Cf. *Fam.* 13.75.1 (SB 60); *Fam.* 7.10.3 (SB 33). For a variation on this principle in a very different context, see *Fam.* 4.5.6 (SB 248).

7. On this complexity in social interaction and the problems inherent in their model of positive and negative politeness, see Brown and Levinson 1987: 65–68; 230–31.

8. On this strategy, see Brown and Levinson 1987: 72 and 172.

9. On Q. Marcius Philippus, probably governor of Cilicia in 47–46 B.C., see Broughton 1952: 289 and 1986: 139; Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 437–39; Deniaux 1993: 415–17. He seems to have returned to Rome with the sons of Antipater of Derbe, a local dynast in Lycaonia, in his custody. Cicero presumably made Antipater's acquaintance while he himself was governor of Cilicia.

10. Kelly 1966: 56–61 as part of a wider discussion of improper influences on Roman litigation (31–68).

11. Braund 1989.

12. Cotton 1986: 456. See also Deniaux 1993: 275–80.

13. This possibility is acknowledged only in passing by Kelly 1966: 57.

14. See Q. Cic. *Comm. Pet.* 48. On the authorship of this work, see most conveniently Tatum 2007: 117 (with n. 17), who notes that in recent years scholarly opinion has shifted toward regarding Quintus Cicero as the genuine author. On the many requests received by Cicero to defend acquaintances in court, cf. his (self-justificatory) remarks at *Planc.* 84.

15. Q. Cic. *Comm. Pet.* 48. See also the good discussion by Tatum 2007: 126–29.

16. Q. Cic. *Comm. Pet.* 45: *si qui roget ut contra amicum aliquem causam recipiamus*.

17. On Caecilius' character, see *Att.* 1.12.1 (SB 12); cf. also Nep. *Att.* 5.1. Atticus was apparently one of the few men who got on well with his uncle, receiving an inheritance of some ten million sesterces on his death; see *Att.* 3.20.1 (SB 65) and Nep. *Att.* 5.2. We can assume that complaints from his uncle regarding Cicero's decision would not have taken long to reach him.

18. Other less formal ways of introducing requests for forgiveness or tolerance include M. Caelius' use of the phrase *te deprecor ne...condemnes* at *Fam.* 8.1.1 (SB 77); and Cicero's use of the phrase *pace tua dixerim* to Trebatius Testa at *Fam.* 7.17.1 (SB 31).

19. Note Quintus Cicero's similar use of the term *belle* at *Comm. Pet.* 45 quoted above. On the sophisticated connotations of *bellus* and its cognates, see Ross 1969: 110–11 and Krostenko 2001: 54–59. Cf. Cicero's criticisms of Appius Claudius' behavior at *Att.* 5.17.6 (SB 110).

20. The quote is from Hom. *Il.* 22.159 in the context of the duel between Achilles and Hector; its point is that the matter at hand involves very high stakes.

21. Cf. Adams 2003: 335–37 on this type of use of Greek quotation in Cicero's letters.

22. See *Att.* 7.10.1 (SB 133) for his departure from Rome and *Att.* 7.18.3 (SB 142) for his invitation to Dionysius. Cf. Marinone 2004: 168. On Pompey's attempts to entrust Cicero with the task of supervising part of Campania and the nearby coast,

see *Att.* 7.11.5 (SB 134) and *Att.* 8.3.4 (SB 153), with discussion by Shackleton Bailey 1968b: 438–40.

23. See *Att.* 7.7.1 (SB 130) for the earlier dispute, although Cicero affects to shrug the matter off at *Att.* 7.8.1 (SB 131). The anecdote related at *Att.* 8.5.1 (SB 157) suggests that Dionysius was a headstrong, unpredictable character. Cf. *Att.* 9.15.5 (SB 183): *ego autem illum malum sanum semper putavi*; see also n. 32 in chapter 1. For Cicero's grumpy reaction to the first refusal, see *Att.* 7.18.3 (SB 142).

24. See also *Fam.* 7.24.2 (SB 260) where Cicero describes another refusal to help in a lawsuit; again this rebuff was not well received.

25. *Att.* 8.5.1 (SB 157): *eodem die venit ipse Dionysius, auctoritate tua permotus, ut suspicor*. The effort involved in the visit would itself have functioned as a sign of respect to Cicero; see Hall 1998.

26. See *Att.* 8.5.1 (SB 157). Cicero describes the letter as *vehemens*.

27. See *Att.* 9.12.2 (SB 179) and *Att.* 9.15.5 (SB 183). For later developments, see *Att.* 10.2.2 (SB 192) and *Att.* 10.16.1 (SB 208). See also n. 32 in chapter 1.

28. See *Fam.* 12.10.1 (SB 425); App. *B Civ.* 3.96; Schwaiger 1979: 39–46; Shackleton Bailey 1980: 244.

29. See *ad Brut.* 1.12.1 (SB 21) for the entreaties of Junia and Servilia. Note too the more general request of Brutus at *ad Brut.* 1.13 (SB 20), apparently in anticipation of such an event.

30. In *ad Brut.* 1.15.11 (SB 23) Cicero describes the laws to which he is referring as *antiquum et omnium civitatum*, and refers to the example of Themistocles' children.

31. Unfortunately, we do not know how Brutus reacted to Cicero's justifications. Although Cicero seems to have held a firm line against Lepidus' children in the initial senatorial debate (note *dixi sententias* at *ad Brut.* 1.15.10; SB 23), the matter evidently dragged on for some time, and in later debates he probably modified his position. See e.g., *ad Brut.* 1.15.13, which, as Shackleton Bailey 1980: 249 suggests, may well be a paragraph added separately to the letter a little later; also *ad Brut.* 1.18.6 (SB 24), where Cicero glosses over the earlier difficulties. He admits at *ad Brut.* 1.15.13 that some observers accuse him of a certain inconsistency in the matter.

32. See Brown and Levinson 1987: 66 and 76 on giving advice as a face-threatening act.

33. Cf. *Fam.* 4.8.1 (SB 229); *Fam.* 5.4.1 (SB 10); *Fam.* 15.13.2 (SB 109); *Att.* 5.9.2 (SB 102); *Att.* 11.12.2 (SB 223). The phrase *non audeam* can be categorized as a strategy that "indicates reluctance" to impinge on the addressee; cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 188.

34. On Oppius, an equestrian, see n. 99 in chapter 1. On Balbus, see Tyrrell and Purser 1894: lxxii–lxxix; Wiseman 1971a: 21–22; 226 (no. 137). He seems to have held no senatorial post until his suffect consulship in 40 B.C.; see Broughton 1952: 378–79; 550.

35. Cf. Wiseman 1971a: 67; Monteleone 2003: 342. For general comments on Balbus' epistolary style, see Hellmuth 1888: 31–32.

36. On Domitius and Pompey at this time, see Shackleton Bailey 1956 and 1968b: 448–59; Burns 1966; Carlsen 2006: 61–62.

37. See Burns 1966: 81–82. On Domitius' appointment as proconsul of Transalpine Gaul for 49 B.C., see Broughton 1952: 261.

38. Cicero uses this strategy in his unusually sharp letter to Fadius, discussed in detail in chapter 4 (*Fam.* 7.27.1; SB 148). Cf. also *Fam.* 5.14.1 (SB 251; L. Lucceius to Cicero); *Q Fr.* 3.1.23 (SB 21); Bowman and Thomas 1994: 290 (frag. 310).

39. On Domitius' political prestige (he was consul in 54 B.C.), see Carlsen 2006: 61.

40. Shackleton Bailey 1956: 58: "Neither could [Pompey] give an order, for Domitius was not his subordinate." Cf. Carlsen 2006: 61.

41. Cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 98–99 for the suspension of facework when requests, commands and the like are in the urgent interests of the addressee.

42. See Val. Max. 6.2.8; Carlsen 2006: 53 and 59.

43. See Plut. *Pomp.* 52; *Crass.* 15; *Cat. Min.* 41; Dio Cass. 39.60. Domitius also vigorously challenged Caesar's position during the first years of the so-called First Triumvirate (Suet. *Ner.* 2). In general, see Gruen 1974: 55–57; Carlsen 2006: 58–61.

44. Domitius' letter was presumably a reply to *Att.* 8.12B. Luceria was some 140 miles from Corfinium, and a round trip of four or five days in these pressing circumstances is plausible enough.

45. On Pompey's various letters to Cicero at this time, see Shackleton Bailey 1968b: 324 and 341–2.

46. From *Att.* 8.1.1 (SB 151), we know that Pompey at this time regularly dictated most of his letters, although he occasionally appended a sentence or two in his own hand at the end.

47. See *Att.* 8.1.2 (SB 151). In this earlier case, he replied to Pompey that he was not concerned with the *safest* course of action, but with the one that best suited the cause of Pompey and the republic.

48. For the misunderstandings and tensions between the two men, see *Att.* 8.12.3 and 6 (SB 162).

49. In general, modern scholars have little to say on Pompey's accomplishments as a letter-writer. For a convenient list of extant material, see Cugusi 1979: 3–7. Greenhalgh 1981: 34–35, 42–43, 152–54 has a few comments to make, as, too, does Seager 2002: 157–58, but overall modern discussions focus more on the political implications of these letters than on their style. No comments in Holliday 1969.

50. See App. *B Civ.* 2.28 and Caes. *B Civ.* 3.79 for Pompey's skillful political exploitation of public letters. Cf. *Brut.* 239; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.36; Tac. *Dial.* 37.2–3.

51. For his charm in person, see *Fam.* 1.2.3 (SB 13); *Att.* 6.2.10 (SB 116); but cf. Caelius' suspicions at *Fam.* 8.1.3 (SB 77). On his manner in letters, see also *Att.* 7.1.3 (SB 124); *Fam.* 3.10.10 (SB 73).

52. Cicero complains about Pompey's lack of *comitas* and *liberalitas* at *Att.* 1.13.4 (SB 13), and refers to his *taciturnitas* at *Fam.* 1.5B.2 (SB 16).

53. See Gebhard 1891: 15–18; 22–24; 42–43. This general assessment is repeated by Münzer 1931: col. 385. It is not surprising, however, to find a well-developed sense of civility in a man who was a close friend of Caesar, whose father was broadly educated (*Brut.* 175), and whose mother was (probably) the Sempronia known to us from Sall. *Cat.* 25. See Duval 1991 for a recent discussion of these relationships; also n. 72 in chapter 1.

54. Cf. Willcock 1995: 79.

55. Cf. also *Fam.* 10.6.2 (SB 370) and *Fam.* 10.16.2 (SB 404), both to Munatius Plancus; and *Fam.* 2.1.2 (SB 45) to Scribonius Curio.



56. Cf. Antonius' remarks at *De or.* 1.262; also *Orat.* 144. On the respect traditionally accorded in Roman society to the example of older members of the community, see, e.g., Bonner 1977: 10–19 and Skidmore 1996: 16–21.

57. Cf. also the careful distinction that Cicero draws between *doceo* and *rogo* at *Fam.* 13.8.2 (SB 321). The social awkwardness of such situations and its corresponding facework continued into Pliny's time; see Plin. *Ep.* 8.24.1. Guillemin's claim 1929: 33 that "[l]e ton doctoral...ne choquait pas les anciens" is misleading and based on evidence that is exceptional rather than typical (most of her examples come from unusual circumstances during the turbulent year 43 B.C.). The examples discussed earlier in this chapter provide a more reliable indicator of the standard attitude; see also *Att.* 10.6.2 (SB 197).

58. Cf. also *Q Fr.* 1.1.36 (SB 1): *sed quid ego te haec hortor quae tu non modo facere potes tua sponte sine cuiusquam praeceptis sed etiam magna iam ex parte perfecisti?* ("No doubt these exhortations are superfluous. You can do all this yourself without advice from anybody, in fact to a great extent you have done it already.") In other letters, too, Cicero affects a certain diffidence about offering advice, even when his addressee has explicitly asked for it. See *Fam.* 4.2.2 (SB 151) and *Fam.* 4.3.3 (SB 202), both addressed to Servius Sulpicius.

59. See Shackleton Bailey 1980: 159 on the meaning of ἀφελῶς. On Cicero's displeasure at Quintus' manumission of Statius a few months earlier, see *Att.* 2.19.1 (SB 39).

60. For the Greek and Roman concern with the associated notions of friendship, flattery and frankness in speech, see Hunter 1985: 482; Habinek 1990; Konstan 1996.

61. For a variation of this strategy, see *Fam.* 10.5.3 (SB 359 to Plancus): *patitur tua summa humanitas et sapientia me quid sentiam libere dicere.* ("Your admirable good nature and good sense allow me to put my thoughts freely into words.")

62. *Att.* 10.8A.1 (SB 199A; Antony to Cicero): *sed tamen non sum arbitratus esse amici non commoveri etiam improborum sermone.* ("However, I did not think it right as a friend to disregard even malicious talk.")

63. Cf. Habinek 1990: 182. In general, however, the ideological significance that Habinek attributes to the principle of candor in friendship tends to overlook the practical need for strategies of politeness.

64. Cf. *Fam.* 2.16.4 (SB 154 to Caelius): *nec me ista terrent quae mihi a te ad timorem fid<el>issime atque amantissime proponuntur.* ("Nor am I alarmed by the bogies which you, in all loyalty and affection, bring out to frighten me.")

65. The phrase attracts no discussion in the commentaries of Shackleton Bailey or Tyrrell and Purser, nor in the studies of Hofmann 1951 or Hofmann and Szantyr 1965. See also *OLD* s.v. *ut* 13, where the common use is recognized of *ut* with *facere* as a way of "conceding the truth of what has been put forward as a hypothesis"; but this entry does not acknowledge its frequent combination with the imperative form of the verb, and its essential function as facework in such contexts.

66. On one occasion, Cicero uses the phrase in a rather more earnest request to Atticus (*Att.* 3.15.8; SB 60): *qua re fac ut omnia ad me perspecta et explorata perscribas meque, ut facis, velis esse aliquem, quoniam qui fui et qui esse potui, iam esse non possum.* ("So please go thoroughly into everything and let me have a full and reliable account. Wish me (as you do) to be somebody, since I can no longer be what I was or what I might have been.")

67. Examples in Fronto's letters further suggest that this usage had become conventionalized as part of the aristocratic polite idiom. See *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 3.3.3: *vale, Caesar, et me, ut facis, ama plurimum*. Also 5.44.1; 5.46.1. Cf. SHA *Clod.* 4.7; Sen. *Ep.* 25.4.

68. Cf. also *Fam.* 5.21.1 (SB 182); *Fam.* 13.18.1 (SB 284); *Q Fr.* 1.2.3 (SB 2).

69. On the colloquial flavor of *si me amas*, see Hofmann 1951: 127–28. It is used frequently in Cicero's correspondence; see, for example, *Fam.* 5.11.3 (SB 257); *Fam.* 7.21 (SB 332); *Fam.* 7.32.2 (SB 113); *Fam.* 9.17.1 (SB 195); *Fam.* 14.2.3 (SB 7); *Att.* 1.20.7 (SB 20); *Att.* 2.19.1 (SB 39).

70. Cf. MacMullen 1986: 514, who asserts that the great men of Rome indicated their rank through "a general air of *noli me tangere*."

## CHAPTER 4

1. See, e.g., Nisbet 1961: 192–97; Craig 2004; also Wray 2001: 113–60 on the use of abusive language in Mediterranean culture.

2. Cf. Hoffer 2003: 93–94, and discussion in the introductory chapter.

3. On the Greek background to these sections, see n. 94 in the introductory chapter.

4. Dyck 1996: 310: "in the event of conflict anger is, on Stoic principles, to be eschewed." See also *Off.* 1.88–89, and Harris 2001: 201–28 on the Roman ideology of anger restraint more generally.

5. Note *gravitate tamen adiuncta* in this passage. This more general concern seems to lie behind Cicero's criticisms of his brother's *iracundia* while provincial governor; see *Q Fr.* 1.1.38 (SB 1) and *Q Fr.* 1.2.7 (SB 2); Harris 2001: 204–6.

6. Cf. Dyck 1996: 310: "the feigning [of anger] has, of course, not a Stoic, but a rhetorical purpose."

7. See, e.g., Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 307; Rawson 1983: 131.

8. Cf. Harris 2001: 211.

9. See Kaster 2002. Note, however, Cicero's defensiveness at *Phil.* 8.16, in which he claims that he has dealt with Q. Fufius Calenus in the senate forcefully (*vehementer*) but not angrily (*iracunde*).

10. On Appius Claudius, see in general Münzer 1899; Schuricht 1994: 14–19. On his correspondence with Cicero, see Constans 1921. The study of Schuricht 1994 generally operates at a level of analysis different from that of modern politeness theory; but see pages 162–80 for a discussion of some of Cicero's linguistic strategies of conflict and reconciliation in his correspondence with Appius. Schneider 1998: 345–447 likewise employs a very different methodological approach.

11. See e.g. *Sest.* 126; *Pis.* 35; *Dom.* 87; Tatum 1999: 181–84. Cicero at *Fam.* 3.10.8 (SB 73) diplomatically plays down Appius' actions during this period.

12. Appius was praetor in 57 B.C., consul in 54 B.C. and censor in 50 B.C.; see Broughton 1952: 547. On his character, see the comment of P. Vatinius at *Fam.* 5.10A.2 (SB 259).

13. For the reconciliation, see *Scaur.* 31; *Fam.* 1.9.4 and 19 (SB 20); Constans 1921: 45–51; Schuricht 1994: 19–23. For Pompey's role, see Quint. *Inst.* 9.3.41 = Shackleton Bailey 2002: 330–31 (frag. VII.11).

14. Their reconciliation seems to have withstood the additional strains brought by the killing of Clodius by Milo in January 52 B.C., whom of course Cicero defended in court; see Alexander 1990: 151 (no. 309). Cf. *Mil.* 75. Since *Fam.* 3.1 (SB 64) makes no mention of the killing or associated trial, it was presumably written before—or a reasonable time after—these events. Cf. Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 359; Schuricht 1994: 22–25; Marinone 2004: 142.

15. Constans 1921: 51: “On voit dans quel excellents termes étaient Cicéron et Appius à la fin de 53 ou au début de 52.”

16. See also the discussion in chapter 1 of the linguistic formality between them evident from *Fam.* 3.4 (SB 67) and *Fam.* 3.5 (SB 68).

17. According to Cicero, the main resistance came in fact only from a single source, the consul Servius Sulpicius Rufus (*Fam.* 3.3.1; SB 66).

18. See, however, *Att.* 5.14.1 (SB 107) for some of the problems that these troops had caused Appius.

19. On the optional nature of such meetings, see *Fam.* 3.6.6 (SB 69): *si putabis me esse conveniendum*.

20. On the *lex Cornelia de maiestate* see Lintott 1993: 47. For the comments of onlookers, see *Fam.* 3.6.4 (SB 69).

21. *Att.* 5.15.1 (SB 108); *Fam.* 3.6.6 (SB 69). See the detailed discussion of Cicero’s whole itinerary in Hunter 1913, conveniently summarized in Shackleton Bailey 1968a: 313 and Marinone 2004: 146–47.

22. Hunter 1913: 87.

23. As Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 364 notes, however, Cicero later criticizes Appius when he employs the same strategy of presenting unpleasant accusations as the remarks of a third party; see *Fam.* 3.8.5 (SB 70).

24. Contrast the attitude that Cicero adopts with Atticus and Brutus toward the same matter at *Att.* 5.17.6 (SB 110).

25. For the notion of “friendly disagreement,” see Hoffer 2003 and further discussion later in this chapter.

26. Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 365 believes not; Constans 1921: 76–81 argues otherwise, as does Hunter 1913: 88–89, although rather tentatively. The disgruntlement between the two men seems to me more likely to have persisted if a meeting did not take place.

27. On this letter, see Constans 1921: 126–27. Cicero received it around October 8 at Mopsuestia (*Fam.* 3.8.1; SB 70).

28. See *Fam.* 3.8.2–5 (SB 70); *Fam.* 3.10.6 (SB 73): *ad laudem tuam*.

29. See *Fam.* 3.8.2 and 5 (SB 70).

30. Cf. Schuricht 1994: 76.

31. See e.g., *Att.* 5.15.2 (SB 108); *Att.* 5.16.3 (SB 109); *Att.* 5.17.2 (SB 110); *Att.* 5.21.5 (SB 114).

32. Atticus seems to have praised Cicero’s magnanimity (βαθύτης) toward Appius, especially with regard to the latter’s policies as governor. See *Att.* 6.1.2 (SB 115), with Shackleton Bailey 1968a: 239, who argues against the interpretation of Tyrrell and Purser 1890: 170–71.

33. Note the element of understatement in the ὑπό prefix; see *LSJ*, s.v. ὑπό F.

34. Cf. the summary in Constans 1921: 126–27.

35. See *Fam.* 3.9.1 (SB 72). Appius had also paid Cicero the literary compliment of dedicating to him a volume on augury (with further installments promised); see *Fam.* 3.9.3 (SB 72); *Fam.* 3.11.4 (SB 74).

36. See Constans 1921: 127.

37. Note the terms *peracute* and *querelae iniquissimae* at *Fam.* 3.7.2 (SB 71).

38. Cf. Schuricht 1994: 169.

39. See *Fam.* 3.9 (SB 72), in which Cicero returns to more conventional formulas of affiliative politeness. Cf. Constans 1921: 127–28.

40. On his return to Rome, Appius was prosecuted *de maiestate* by P. Cornelius Dolabella, probably in connection with the *lex Cornelia*. See *Fam.* 8.6.1 (SB 88); *Fam.* 3.10.1 (SB 73); Alexander 1990: 166 (no. 344) and 167 (no. 345). Appius' acquaintances in Rome may also have reassured him of Cicero's generally sound conduct (see *Fam.* 3.9.1; SB 72).

41. Cf. also the distinction drawn between *purgo* and *accuso* at *Fam.* 3.10.7 (SB 73).

42. New tensions arose in the coming months that called for further polite negotiation; see e.g., *Fam.* 3.12.2–3 (SB 75); also the extensive remonstrance at *Fam.* 3.10.6–10 (SB 73).

43. See *Fam.* 5.1 (SB 1) and *Fam.* 5.2 (SB 2). For recent discussions, see Ooteghem 1957; Schuricht 1994: 187–88; Schneider 1998: 85–115; Hoffer 2003. On Metellus Celer and Nepos, see Münzer 1897a and 1897b respectively. The exact relationship between the two men has been debated; for the likelihood of them being full brothers (despite their shared *praenomen*, Quintus), see Wiseman 1971b.

44. Dio Cass. 37.42. On Nepos as tribune in 62 B.C., see Broughton 1952: 174; he took office on December 10, 63 B.C..

45. On this *contio* and Cicero's oath as outgoing consul, see *Fam.* 5.2.7 (SB 2); *Pis.* 6; Plut. *Cic.* 23; Dio Cass. 37.38. Nepos clashed further with Cicero in the senate on January 1 and held a hostile *contio* on January 3 (*Fam.* 5.2.8). Cicero delivered a speech in the senate in reply, perhaps on January 7 or 8, which was circulated soon after. See Crawford 1994: 215–22 on *contra Contionem Q. Metelli*; *Att.* 1.13.5 (SB 13). In general see Münzer 1897b: col. 1217; Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 273–74; Marinone 2004: 88–89.

46. See *Cat.* 2.5–6; 26; *Fam.* 5.2.1 (SB 2); Sall. *Cat.* 30.5; 42.3; 57.2; Plut. *Cic.* 16.

47. See *Fam.* 5.1.2 (SB 1): *itaque in luctu et squalore sum*. Cf. Hoffer 2003: 94. Nepos was agitating for the recall of Pompey from the east in order to deal with the threat of Catiline. See Plut. *Cat. Min.* 26–28; *Cic.* 23; Dio Cass. 37.43; Seager 2002: 72–76. Frustrated in these designs, he soon left Rome to join Pompey; Plut. *Cat. Min.* 29; *Cic.* 23.

48. On this form of greeting as a “highly formal expression” (and so a way of imparting social distance), see Adams 1978: 163.

49. Cf. Hoffer 2003: 94 on Celer's use of “value-laden” terms.

50. On Celer's use of the plural *vos*, see Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 275. On the significance of *clementia*, see the good comments by Hoffer 2003: 96.

51. Cicero in his reply notes Celer's threatening tone but diplomatically chooses to underplay it (*Fam.* 5.2.10): *tibi paene minitanti nobis* (note the effect of *paene*).

52. See, e.g., Brunt 1986.

53. See Miller 1914: 56 and Hutchinson 1998: 18–19 for the social expectation that a writer apologize for a brief letter.

54. On the notion of status warriors in Homeric society, see van Wees 1992; cf. Wiseman 1985.

55. Wiseman 1971a: 101: “an example of aristocratic arrogance at its crudest.”

56. Hoffer 2003: 93.

57. Cf. Hoffer 2003: 99–100.

58. See, e.g., *Red. sen.* 25–26; *Sest.* 130; *Fam.* 5.4 (SB 10) and *Fam.* 5.3 (SB 11); Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 273; Hoffer 2003: 93.

59. Hoffer 2003: 96 may be right to suggest that Celer’s letter aims to elicit an apology from Cicero; but it certainly attempts to polarize public opinion.

60. See the good rhetorical analysis by Hoffer 2003: 97–101.

61. Cf. Hoffer 2003: 97. Such heavy-handed sarcasm occurs quite frequently in his extant orations; see, e.g., *Phil.* 8.16; 13.4.

62. Hoffer 2003: 98 stresses the rhetorical dimension of this trope (*communicatio*). But in terms of politeness it saves Celer’s face by not making explicit these supposedly negative judgments.

63. On Antonius Hybrida, see Klebs 1894; Gruen 1973. The man’s political career enjoyed a remarkable variety of fortunes: he was expelled from the senate by the censors in 70 B.C.; reached the consulship in 63 B.C.; was prosecuted in 59 B.C. and exiled; then, after being restored by Caesar, found himself censor in 42 B.C.. Cf. Broughton 1952: 531; Alexander 1990: 119–20 (no. 241); *Asc. Tog.* 84 (Clark). On Cicero’s letter to him, see also Schuricht 1994: 189–90.

64. Atticus had business dealings with the town of Sicyon, which owed him money; see *Att.* 1.13.1 (SB 13).

65. Cf. *Fam.* 2.17.6 (SB 117) to Cn. Sallustius (July 50 B.C.), in which Cicero expresses reservations about sending a letter of recommendation to Bibulus.

66. See, e.g., *Fam.* 6.16 (SB 323); *Fam.* 13.4.4 (SB 318); *Fam.* 13.8.1 (SB 321); *Fam.* 13.29.1 (SB 282); *Fam.* 13.50.1 (SB 266); cf. Deniaux 1993: 44.

67. Deniaux 1993: 108; cf. Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 282.

68. See *Asc. Tog.* 82–83 (Clark) on Cicero’s invective of 64 B.C., *In Toga Candida*; Crawford 1994: 159–99. Antonius and Catiline responded by making insulting comments about Cicero’s *novitas* (*Asc. Tog.* 93–94).

69. See Cicero’s complaints to Atticus in January 61 B.C. at *Att.* 1.12.2 (SB 12): *Antonium porro in cogendis pecuniis dictitare partem mihi quaeri*.

70. On Cicero’s use of the verb *comperio* in connection with the Catilinarian conspiracy, see *Att.* 1.14.5 (SB 14); Shackleton Bailey 1965: 311–12.

71. Cicero clearly expects Atticus to discuss these grievances with Antonius (*ea... malo te ex Pomponio... cognoscere*), and to support his side of the dispute (*cui non minus molesta fuerunt*). But in fact the belligerent tone of his letter does not seem to have compromised Antonius’ support for Atticus; see *Att.* 1.16.16 (SB 16) where Cicero in July 61 B.C. refers to writing a letter of thanks to Antonius for helping Atticus. It does not follow, however, that the rift between Cicero and Antonius was fully repaired. It was only with reluctance that Cicero in 59 B.C. defended Antonius against charges of *maiestas* (or possibly provincial extortion); Mitchell 1991: 114–18; cf. *Cael.* 74; *Flac.* 5.

72. Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 486. The manuscripts list the recipient of the letter simply as “Gallus.” Cf. *Fam.* 7.26 (SB 210), and several other letters in the same book

addressed to M. Fabius Gallus (*Fam.* 7.23–25; SB 209, 260, 261). But Shackleton Bailey 1962 identifies the recipient as T. Fadius. See also Münzer 1909; Wiseman 1971a: 230 (no. 169); Deniaux 1993: 497–98.

73. Münzer 1909: col. 1959 reserves judgement on the reason for his exile; Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 486 suggests a charge of electoral corruption through the recent *lex Pompeia* on *ambitus*; cf. Alexander 1990: 156 (no. 318).

74. See Marinone 2004: 280 for a conspectus of suggested dates. For the present discussion, the exact date of the letter is not crucial. Interpretation of its circumstances depends largely on our understanding of the term *intercessor* used by Cicero at *Fam.* 7.27.1 (SB 148). As Shackleton Bailey 1977a: 486 argues, the matter is probably a financial one with no connection to Fadius' restoration from exile (note the monetary pun *tibi nemo credit* at *Fam.* 7.27.1).

75. See *Att.* 8.12B.1 (SB 162B) discussed in the previous chapter. Cf. also Cicero's use of *demiror* a little later at *Fam.* 7.27.2 (SB 148).

76. Cicero, of course, had a reputation within his own lifetime as one of Rome's leading wits. See *Fam.* 7.32 (SB 113); *Fam.* 15.21 (SB 207); Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.5; Plut. *Cic.* 26–27; Macrobian *Sat.* 2.1.12.

77. See *De or.* 2.218–27 for a discussion of *dicacitas* as an oratorical weapon.

78. See *Att.* 1.16.10 (SB 16): [sc. Clodius] *magnis clamoribus adflictus conticuit et concidit*.

79. Note that the conflicts considered in this chapter also highlight the role played in aristocratic society by rumor, report, and malicious talk: Celer is upset by reports of comments made by Cicero in the senate; Cicero in turn is angered by mocking jibes made at his expense by Antonius, jibes that are apparently doing the rounds in Rome; and Appius Claudius is incensed by rumors of Cicero's disparaging remarks during dinner-party talk.

80. Cf. Harris 2001: 210–11 on the “absolutist” attitude toward anger in Cicero's philosophical treatises.

81. Cicero had granted L. Gavius a prefecture at the request of Brutus, whose financial interests in Cappadocia the man was overseeing (*Att.* 6.1.4; SB 115). He had evidently omitted on numerous other occasions to show Cicero the courtesies expected of a member of his staff. See *Att.* 6.3.6 (SB 117), in which Cicero refers to him as *P. Clodi canis* (“one of P. Clodius' dogs”). On Cicero's forbearance, see also Caesar's significant remarks regarding his innate *facilitas* reported at *Att.* 14.1.2 (SB 355); *Att.* 14.2.3 (SB 356); cf. *Att.* 14.12.2 (SB 366).

## CHAPTER 5

1. *Fam.* 11.2 (SB 329) and *Fam.* 11.3 (SB 336). These letters have received little discussion from modern scholars beyond the information they provide regarding the political developments of the time. Kroll 1963: 197–98 offers some brief comments.

2. For convenient summaries of relevant events, see Frisch 1946: 63–84 (whose view is essentially Cicero-centric) and Rawson 1994.

3. For Antony in Campania, see *Phil.* 2.100; *Att.* 14.21.2 (SB 375); for his advice to Brutus and Cassius, see *Fam.* 11.2.1 (SB 329); cf. *Att.* 14.20.2 (SB 374).

4. See *Phil.* 2.108; *App. B Civ.* 3.5; *Att.* 15.5.2–3 (SB 383).

5. *Att.* 14.7.1 (SB 361).

6. See *Phil.* 2.31.

7. On optimism as a strategy of “positive” politeness, see Brown and Levinson 1987: 126–27. The remarks of Cassius and Brutus here exploit the same dynamic as the “friendship-permits-frankness” convention noted in chapter 3. If Antony *does* take offense at the letter, he will show himself to be lacking in the *fides et benevolentia* of a real friend. Cf. the strategy that lies behind Balbus and Oppius’ phrase *freti tua humanitate* at *Att.* 9.7A.1 (SB 174A).

8. Cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 130 and 226.

9. On the attempts of Caesarian supporters to establish an altar to Caesar in the forum (led by the so-called false Marius), see *Att.* 14.15.1 (SB 369); *Phil.* 1.5; 2.107; Weinstock 1971: 364–67; Scardigli 1980. See also the discussion later in this chapter on the role of Dolabella in suppressing these attempts.

10. *Att.* 14.13A (SB 367A); see discussion in chapter 2.

11. See Rawson 1986 for the outlines of this propaganda war. Cf. also *Att.* 15.1.3 (SB 377), in which Pansa is reported as (apparently disingenuously) asserting that violence was to be feared as much from Brutus and Cassius as from Antony.

12. See *Att.* 15.9.1 (SB 387): *ut Brutus in Asia, Cassius in Sicilia frumentum emendum et ad urbem mittendum curarent*; also *Att.* 15.10 (SB 388); *Att.* 15.11.1 (SB 389); Broughton 1952: 320–21.

13. See Cicero’s initial reaction at *Att.* 15.10 (SB 388), and Cassius’ view of the offer, reported at *Att.* 15.11.1 (SB 389). Cf. *Nep. Att.* 8.5 (with the emendation *dicis causa*).

14. Cf. Ramsey and Licht 1997: 102, n. 24.

15. The offer was evidently able to be construed as a *beneficium* from Antony; see *Att.* 15.10 (SB 388). Moreover, despite his initially dismissive reaction, Cicero recognized the safety that the new commissions offered; see *Att.* 15.11.1 (SB 389).

16. See *Att.* 15.11 (SB 389).

17. See *Phil.* 10.7; *Att.* 15.29.1 (SB 408); *Att.* 16.2.3 (SB 412); *Att.* 16.5.1 (SB 410).

18. On the format that this celebration took, including the *ludi funebres* in honor of Caesar, see Ramsey and Licht 1997: 48–57.

19. I follow here the sequence of events proposed by Ramsey 2001: 260 and 267; cf. Ramsey 2003: 102. The view of Gelzer 1919: col. 998, followed by Shackleton Bailey 1967: 291–92 and 1977b: 475–76, is that Cassius and Brutus published a single edict at the end of July declaring their intention to lay aside their posts as praetor and withdraw into exile. Much depends on our interpretation of the phrase *de suo iure decedere* at *Fam.* 11.3.1; see Ramsey 2001: 260, n. 24.

20. See *Fam.* 11.3.1 (SB 336). On the legislation passed at the meeting of the senate on August 1, see Broughton 1952: 321; cf. Ramsey 2001: 260, with n. 26 on the vexed question of why and when the provinces of Crete and Cyrene were assigned to Brutus and Cassius.

21. For the mention of exile in their edicts, see Vell. *Pat.* 2.62.3. *Phil.* 1.8 and *Att.* 16.7.1 (SB 415) recount some of these events.

22. See *Fam.* 11.3.3: *consul arma minetur* (“a consul threatens military violence”); *nulla enim minantis auctoritas apud liberos est...fortassis ea re minaciter agis ut iudicium nostrum metus videatur*. (“One who employs threats wields no authority

among free men...and perhaps you behave so threateningly to make our reasoned decision look like fear.”)

23. Cf. Monteleone 2003: 359, n. 835: “È chiaro che l’editto di Antonio era uno strumento di propaganda e destinatari primari ne erano i veterani.”

24. Cf. also the attempts by Antony between May and July 44 B.C. to obstruct Octavian’s actions commemorating Caesar; see Weinstock 1971: 367–70.

25. On the tone of the direct address in this context, see Adams 1978: 163; Shackleton Bailey 1995: 10; Dickey 2002: 218.

26. Note here another euphemistic use of the verb *miror* (see discussion in chapter 3).

27. See also their allusions to the key concept of *libertas* twice further in this section: *concordiae ac libertatis causa; nulla enim minantis auctoritas apud liberos* est. On the exploitation of this term in the propaganda of the assassins, see e.g., Wirszubski 1950: 90–91; Crawford 1983: 513–17; Rawson 1986: 118–19.

28. See *Phil.* 3.15–21 for reports (perhaps rhetorically exaggerated) of some of the threats and taunts in Antony’s edicts; also *Phil.* 2.107; 13.19. *Phil.* 2.30 suggests that Antony in September 44 referred to Brutus with respect; but this civility may well have been shaped by his senatorial audience (cf. *Phil.* 3.23). He employs a different approach in material aimed at the veterans. Note, too, that Cicero’s claim (*Phil.* 2.31) that this same civility was always (*semper*) employed in Antony’s speeches *apud populum Romanum* may be overstated because of the orator’s desire to produce an effective rhetorical dilemma. Cf., too, the later letters in which Antony attacked Octavian (*Suet. Aug.* 7 and 69; *Tac. Ann.* 4.34.8). In general see Charlesworth 1933 and Scott 1933.

29. As Narducci 1989: 141–88 has shown, such poise and civility came to be regarded as the mark of the traditional aristocratic statesman. In this respect, we may compare the political connotations conveyed by the style of oratorical delivery practised by public speakers in Rome. As David 1980 has demonstrated, an especially fervid and energetic style of oratory seems to have been adopted by speakers pursuing policies via *popularis* methods, whereas conservative politicians cultivated a more restrained and dignified manner. See also Corbeill 2004: 107–39.

30. On Plancus’ correspondence with Cicero, see Walser 1957; Perrochat 1957; Rambaud 1958; also Willcock 1995. Traditional philological analyses of his epistolary style are provided by Rhodius 1896 and Bergmüller 1897. For biographical details, see Tyrrell and Purser 1899: lxxviii–lxxv; Hanslik 1933; Watkins 1997.

31. For Plancus’ letters to Cicero, see *Fam.* 10.4 (SB 358); *Fam.* 10.7 (SB 372); *Fam.* 10.9 (SB 379); *Fam.* 10.11 (SB 382); *Fam.* 10.15 (SB 390); *Fam.* 10.17 (SB 398); *Fam.* 10.18 (SB 395); *Fam.* 10.21 (SB 391); *Fam.* 10.21a (SB 392); *Fam.* 10.23 (SB 414); *Fam.* 10.24 (SB 428). There is also one letter extant from Plancus addressed to the senate (*Fam.* 10.8; SB 371), and a letter written jointly with D. Brutus to the senate and people (*Fam.* 11.13A; SB 418).

32. See n. 84 in chapter 1. Plancus is generally regarded as one of Cicero’s most refined correspondents in stylistic terms; see Bergmüller 1897: vii–x; 92–94; Tyrrell and Purser 1899: lxx; Watkins 1997: 20. His literary accomplishments are also suggested by the fact that Asconius at *Mil.* 32 (Clark) uses the term *orator* to identify him; see also Kaster 1995: 317–18.

33. For Plancus’ post as legate, see *Caes. B Afr.* 4. He probably served as praetor in the following year; Broughton 1952: 307.



34. See Broughton 1952: 329.

35. See Broughton 1952: 326–31; 341–50.

36. Plancus had been appointed consul designate for 42 B.C. by Caesar; see *Fam.* 10.1.1 (SB 340); *Fam.* 10.8 (SB 371) prescript; *Phil.* 3.38. Retaining this future post may have been a significant concern in his political negotiations at this time; see Watkins 1997: 71–72.

37. See *Phil.* 5.5; 7.3; 12.13; 13.37; Watkins 1997: 70–72.

38. Watkins 1997: 20–21, 57 and 62–63 notes this father-son dynamic in the correspondence but underplays its actively calculating element.

39. Note that the phrase *patitur...dicere* presents another variation of the “friendship-permits-frankness” strategy discussed in chapter 3.

40. Cf. *Plut. Ant.* 18 where Antony is said to have addressed Lepidus as father, primarily to indicate his respect and goodwill at a time of great tension. A similar assertion regarding Octavian and Cicero (*patrem appellet*) appears in *ad Brut.* 1.17.5 (SB 26) ascribed to M. Brutus. The letter, however, is probably spurious; see Shackleton Bailey 1980: 10–14 and 2002: 204–5. For recent arguments to the contrary, see Moles 1997. On *pater* as a form of address in general, see Dickey 2002: 120–22. Horace at *Epist.* 1.6.54–55 associates it with the language of ingratiation.

41. The fragment number refers to Shackleton Bailey 2002, who provides at 318–27 a text and English translation of the fragments of Cicero’s correspondence with Octavian. On Octavian’s letters in general, see Malcovati 1969 and Cugusi 1979: 336–37.

42. For the aphorism (*laudandum adolescentem, ornandum, tollendum*), see *Fam.* 11.20.1 (SB 401) from D. Brutus to Cicero; also *Suet. Aug.* 12 and *Vell. Pat.* 2.62.6. Our first reference to the remark dates to May 43 B.C., but Cicero had declared his mistrust of Octavian as early as April 44 B.C.; see, e.g., *Att.* 14.12.2 (SB 366); *Att.* 15.12.2 (SB 390).

43. For a survey of Octavian’s dealings with Cicero in 44–43 B.C., see Bellen 1985; also Moles 1988: 52 on the problems of Plutarch’s “psycho-historical” exploration of Cicero’s character with respect to his relationship with Octavian. Certainly Cicero at the time was sharply criticized by contemporaries for his promotion of Octavian’s cause, especially by M. Brutus; see *ad Brut.* 1.4 (SB 10); *ad Brut.* 1.4A (SB 11); *Phil.* 3.3–8 and 37–39; 5.23 and 42–53. But Cicero’s decisions were based on political pragmatism (albeit at times misjudged) rather than a naïve trust in Octavian’s intentions. On the dubious claims found at *App. B Civ.* 3.82, *Dio Cass.* 46.42 and *Plut. Cic.* 45 that Octavian, following the deaths of Hirtius and Pansa in April 43 B.C., persuaded Cicero to propose that the two of them be appointed consul, see Mitchell 1991: 322–23, n. 77.

44. See Broughton 1952: 317; *Vell. Pat.* 2.58.3. On Dolabella in general, see Dettenhofer 1992: 119–22; 167–74; 310–14.

45. See *Phil.* 1.30 and *Suet. Iul.* 85; Dettenhofer 1992: 310; also n. 9 in this chapter.

46. The letter is preserved in both the correspondence to Atticus (as *Att.* 14.17A; SB 371A) and the correspondence to Cicero’s friends (as *Fam.* 9.14; SB 326).

47. See *Att.* 7.13.3 (SB 136) and *Fam.* 16.12.5 (SB 146) in 49 B.C.; *Att.* 11.7.2 (SB 218) in 48 B.C. Cf. Dettenhofer 1992: 165–66.

48. See especially *Fam.* 9.10 (SB 217) from January 45 B.C., in which Cicero freely incorporates Greek words.

49. For Dolabella's sophistication, see *Att.* 7.3.12 (SB 126) (*gener est suavis mihi*) and *Att.* 9.16.3 (SB 185).

50. See *Fam.* 9.9 (SB 157), especially section 3: *mi iucundissime Cicero*.

51. Cicero employs a similar strategy in a letter to Pompey in 62 B.C. (*Fam.* 5.7.3; SB 3), casting himself as Laelius to Pompey's Scipio; see also *Fam.* 5.12.6–7 (SB 22) in which L. Luceius is to play the part of Homer celebrating Cicero's heroic achievements.

52. See *Att.* 14.18.1 (SB 373): *saepius me iam agitas quod rem gestam Dolabellae nimis in caelum videar efferre*. ("Not for the first time you take me to task for appearing to extol Dolabella's exploit too enthusiastically.") Atticus also urged Cicero to exercise more restraint in his praise of the man in the Second Philippic; see *Att.* 16.11.2 (SB 420).

53. *Att.* 14.18.1 (SB 373; May 9, 44 B.C.): *satis aculeatas ad Dolabellam litteras dedi*. ("I sent Dolabella a sufficiently pointed letter.")

54. See *Att.* 15.4A (SB 382); *Att.* 15.8.1 (SB 385); *Att.* 15.11.4 (SB 389); Broughton 1952: 317 and 344; Ramsey 2003: 96–97.

55. Less than a year later, however, Cicero was fiercely denouncing Dolabella for his murder of C. Trebonius in Syria; see *Phil.* 11.1–16; Münzer 1937: cols. 2278–79.

56. See *Phil.* 13.7–21.

57. See Shackleton Bailey 1977b: 509 on Streng's suggestion that Cicero removed any remarks about Plancus following the arrival of *Fam.* 10.8 (SB 371).

58. The closest parallel is the use of *complexum* at *Att.* 4.1.2 (SB 73) following Cicero's return from exile. Cf. also *Fam.* 3.11.2 (SB 74).

59. For the harshness of tone in his earlier letters, see *Fam.* 10.6.3 (SB 370): *scripsi paulo severius*; and *Fam.* 10.5.3 (SB 359): *quid sentiam libere dicere*. For some observations on Cicero's exhortations to virtue in his correspondence with Plancus, see Leach 2006: 259–62.

60. See Marinone 2004: 266 and 508.

61. See *Fam.* 10.15.2 (SB 390); *Fam.* 10.17.1 (SB 398); *Fam.* 10.18 (SB 395).

62. See *Fam.* 10.21 (SB 391).

63. See their jointly written letter at *Fam.* 11.13A (SB 418), dating to around June 10, 43 B.C. As Watkins 1997: 83 notes, it is difficult to imagine Decimus joining with Plancus were he not convinced of the reliability of the man's intentions. At *Fam.* 11.15.1 (SB 422) Cicero praises their *coniunctio* and *concordia*, although these remarks may have been prompted precisely by the unlikely nature of their alliance; see also *Fam.* 10.26.1 (SB 424); Dio Cass. 46.53.1.

64. See, e.g., *Fam.* 10.23.7 (SB 414): *te quidem, mi Cicero, in dies mehercules habeo cariorem*; also *Fam.* 10.21.6 (SB 391). Such remarks are usually combined with factual accounts of military and political developments.

65. See App. *B Civ.* 3.96–97; Dio Cass. 46.53.1–3. Hanslik 1933: col. 548, lines 43–58 assigns Plancus' capitulation to September 43 B.C.; cf. Watkins 1997: 89. See also Bosworth 1972: 460–61.

66. Vell. Pat. 2.83.1: *humillimus adsentator reginae et infra servos cliens*.

67. Sen. *Q Nat.* 4, pref. 5: *Plancus, artifex ante Villeium maximus aiebat non esse occulte nec ex dissimulato blandiendum*. ("Plancus, the greatest flattery artist before Villeius, used to say that flattery must not be concealed or dissembled.") Some editors read Vitellius for Villeius.

68. On the hostile tradition, see Watkins 1997: 1–8; also Wright 2002 for a reassertion of the likely influence upon it of Asinius Pollio. The verdict of most modern scholars on Plancus has been similarly critical; see, e.g., Hanslik 1933: col. 551: “so ist er freilich einer der schwächsten Charaktere seiner Zeit.” Watkins 1997: 53, n. 1 provides a convenient summary of such views.

69. It was Plancus who proposed for Octavian the honorific title of Augustus in 27 B.C.; see Suet. *Aug.* 7; Hanslik 1933: col. 550. For a recent assessment of his role in Octavian’s regime, see Osgood 2006: 276–80.

70. See *Fam.* 10.24.5–8 (SB 428); also *Fam.* 10.23.6 (SB 414). Watkins 1997: 89 views Plancus’ complaints here as “only maintaining appearances to the end.”

71. On the troops from Africa, see *Fam.* 11.26 (SB 410); *Fam.* 11.14.2 (SB 413); *Fam.* 10.24.8 (SB 428); cf. App. *B Civ.* 3.85 and 91.

72. App. *B Civ.* 3.97 reports that Decimus’ four most experienced legions were weakened from lack of food, and the other six consisted largely of raw recruits. Cf. the summary given by Watkins 1997: 88, with n. 65.

73. Lepidus, Asinius Pollio and Decimus Brutus were all troubled by threats of mutinies and desertions by their troops; see *Fam.* 10.21.4 (SB 391); *Fam.* 10.35 (SB 408); *Fam.* 10.32.4 (SB 415); App. *B Civ.* 3.97.

74. See the account at App. *B Civ.* 3.97–98. For Octavian’s (sometimes concealed) antipathy towards Decimus, see App. *B Civ.* 3.73 and Dio Cass. 45.14–15.

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